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BOOK REVIEWS

Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption. By Daniel Block. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, 704 pp., $54.99.

This volume represents the culmination of Daniel Block's extensive thinking about how Scripture fits together as a comprehensive whole—thoughts garnered over nearly a lifetime of teaching, studying, and wrestling with Scripture. For Block, Scripture is the unified story of God at work in history to restore creation, damaged as it was by Adam and Eve's sin in the garden, to the "ideal state" that God intended for creation from the beginning (p. 5). This single story of redemption can be divided into four distinct acts: "the background to the drama of redemption," "the cosmic need for redemption," "the story of the chosen agents of redemption," and "the appearance and mission of the Redeemer" (p. 6). To these four can be added a fifth act, the fulfillment of which lies in the future: the restoration of all things in the new heaven and the new earth (p. 14). The key to understanding this story and to linking these acts together, according to Block, is the idea of *covenance*, which refers to the concept of forming, formalizing, or governing non-natural relationships or restoring natural relationships by means of a formal agreement—a covenant (pp. 1, 4).

Using Late Bronze Age Hittite treaties as a framework for analysis, Block identifies two types of suzerain-vassal covenants that God graciously established to move forward his plan of redemption: *missional/communal covenants* and *administrative covenants* (p. 4). Missional/communal covenants focus on the well-being of the vassal as well as the mission assigned to the vassal (p. 4). Block includes two covenants in this category: the cosmic covenant (chap. 1) and the Israelite covenant (chaps. 3–9). The cosmic covenant refers to the covenant God established between himself, the earth, and every living creature, including humanity, to never again destroy the earth with a flood (pp. 38–39). It was designed to restore the natural relationship that existed between God, the earth, and every living creature before humanity's fall into sin (pp. 40–41). The Israelite covenant, on the other hand, refers to the single covenant God established between himself, the patriarchs, and Israel with a view to the redemption of both the earth and all humanity (p. 68). This covenant was designed to be a miniature version of the cosmic covenant, with the land of Canaan standing in place of the earth and Israel standing in place of all humanity (p. 68). Block includes four covenants under this category and refers to them as *stages* of the Israelite covenant: the Abrahamic covenant (chaps. 3–4), the covenant at Sinai (chaps. 5–6), the covenant on the Plains of Moab (chaps. 7–8), and the new Israelite covenant (chap. 9).

Administrative covenants were designed to ensure the proper functioning of the missional/communal covenants. Block includes three covenants in this category: the Adamic covenant (chap. 2), the Davidic covenant (chaps. 10–12), and the Levitical covenant (excursus after chap. 6). The Adamic covenant refers, somewhat

unexpectedly, to the covenant God made with Noah and his descendants to restore them to the role Adam originally possessed as the steward of God's creation (p. 61). This covenant was designed to administer the cosmic covenant. Similarly, the Davidic covenant was designed to administer the Israelite covenant and was intended to be a miniature version of the Adamic covenant (p. 303). The Levitical covenant was designed to minister to the spiritual needs of the Israelites and "to smooth the face" of YHWH through sacrifice (pp. 205, 207).

A somewhat unique feature of this volume is that Block, an OT specialist, devotes nearly forty percent of this volume to the NT (chaps. 13–20). These chapters focus on a wide range of texts that are directly relevant to the missional/communal and administrative covenants of the OT. Block's exposition of these passages is thorough, engaging, and essential for understanding his overall view of how Scripture fits together as a unified whole. Despite the many strengths of these chapters, however, some readers may find themselves frustrated with portions of his exposition that are insufficiently nuanced, explained, or defended in light of current debates in NT studies. Perhaps the most noticeable example is Block's statement that the Pharisees had transformed the OT's grace-based view of the Torah into a "merit-based legal system" and that Second Temple Judaism had essentially "become a meritocracy" (p. 465).

A key theological tension Block deals with in this volume is the tension between the OT's positive statements about OT law and the somewhat negative views found in the writings of Paul. Block helpfully highlights these positive statements and shows that the fulfillment of these laws was meant to be a response to God's grace rather than a means to merit God's favor (pp. 201–4). Block resolves this tension by suggesting that Paul's negative statements were directed at "the man-made accretions of the Oral Torah" promulgated by the Pharisees and their transformation of the Torah into an idol (p. 492). This solution, however, is difficult to justify. Paul's somewhat negative statements about OT law are not simply directed at "the man-made accretions of the Oral Torah," but are directed at OT law itself in light of both the first coming of Christ and the extension of God's grace to Gentiles apart from the requirement to keep the biblically mandated boundary markers of Judaism.

Block's expositions of OT texts, on the other hand, are characterized by a carefulness and depth of understanding that can only be achieved by decades of teaching, writing, and engaging with OT scholarship on the highest level. Two elements deserve special mention. First, Block's discussion of the establishment of the covenant at Sinai is especially helpful, particularly his discussion about the function of the two stone tablets as symbols of the covenant (pp. 163–70). Second, Block's extensive discussion of the Davidic covenant, including its aftermath in prophetic texts and the Psalms, will serve as an important resource for understanding the OT's teaching about the Messiah.

A significant drawback to this volume, however, is its intentional lack of interaction with secondary literature and alternative points of view, including alternative frameworks for understanding the relationship between the divine-human covenants of the OT. This is in keeping with the target audience of this volume, name-

ly, laypeople in the context of the church (pp. xiv–xv). While this has certainly kept Block's discussions focused and uncluttered, it also means his interpretations do not benefit from the clarity and strength of argumentation that come from serious interaction with competing points of view.

Overall, this is an excellent work of redemptive-historical biblical theology. Its greatest strength, however, is its careful and refreshing exposition of biblical texts that relate to key moments in redemptive history. These expositions are far more detailed and theologically rich than what is typically found in either commentaries or most works of biblical theology and are well worth the price of this volume.

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The Path of Faith: A Biblical Theology of Covenant and Law. By Brandon D. Crowe. Essential Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021, 188 pp., $22.00 paper.

In the new work *Path of Faith,* author Brandon Crowe provides a biblical-theological overview of the themes of law and covenant from within the framework of Reformed/Covenant Theology. He states that his goal is "to show the unity of the biblical witness and the consistent call for God's people to covenant loyalty, all while recognizing the unique, saving work of Christ on our behalf" (p. xi). Moreover, in keeping with the aims of the Essential Studies in Biblical Theology series, *The Path of Faith* is written with the nonspecialist in mind, and Crowe has succeeded at writing an accessible primer for those who want to learn about law and covenant from a Reformed perspective.

In the book's first five chapters, he surveys the overall narrative of the OT while attending to the features of the Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants. In addition, he concludes this half of the book by analyzing the role the latter prophets played in calling God's people back to covenant fidelity. As already mentioned, these chapters reflect on the subjects of law and covenant from within the contours of covenant theology. Thus, Crowe contends that God established a covenant of works with Adam, graciously promising him eternal life provided that Adam render perfect obedience. After Adam sinned, God provided a covenant of grace that promised salvation through the perfect obedience of a mediator. This second Adamic covenant serves as the overarching grid through which all other divine covenants are to be understood. This theological axiom leads Crowe to posit great continuity between the Mosaic Covenant and the New Covenant: according to him, both make faith in Christ the sole basis of redemption and both require covenant members to obey God's moral law from the heart. And though Crowe argues that the old covenant includes the principle of "life by works" (p. 50), he maintains that this principle was intended to teach sinners of their need for a deliverer. Thus, when it comes to the promise of salvation and expectations for covenant members, the New Covenant is argued to be much like the Old Covenant.

From chapter 6 onward, Crowe begins to unpack how the themes of covenant and law are developed in the NT. He explains that, as the obedient Son of God, Christ proves to be the better Adam/Israel/David who accomplishes the redemption of sinners through his death and resurrection. However, Jesus does more than save God's people from their sins; he also reveals God's will and calls his disciples to obey the moral law so they might experience a life of blessing. So while obedience to God's law may not be the basis of one's redemption, "God's people are redeemed in order that they might obey" (p. 117); therefore, the need to obey the moral aspects of the law (as opposed to its civil and ceremonial dimensions) persists in the age of the New Covenant. Moreover, though Christ's coming does entail a "clearer, richer, fuller, and more extensive" internal work of God (p. 148), Crowe claims the NT depicts fundamental continuity between the Old and New Covenants: both make faith the basis of salvation, both require obedience to God's law, and both give rise to covenant communities composed of believers and unbelievers.

In my estimation, Crowe has written a helpful introduction to the themes of law and covenant from a Reformed perspective. He writes with a clarity and an emphasis on practical discipleship that will be appealing to many. And though he does not break new ground, Crowe does an admirable job of presenting the classic Reformed view and of situating it within the context of the overall storyline of the Bible. At the same time, because of the author's chosen aims, *The Path of Faith* may leave certain readers unsatisfied. For instance, those seeking to the learn about the different ways Christians have approached the Bible's overarching structure should look elsewhere, since Crowe describes only the Reformed perspective. Moreover, apart from a few insightful comments here and there, readers already familiar with covenant theology will benefit little from the book. Finally, proponents of other approaches to the Bible's overall structure are unlikely to find *The Path of Faith* persuasive, since Crowe presents familiar arguments and does not engage deeply with criticisms of covenant theology.

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Redemptive Kingdom Diversity: A Biblical Theology of the People of God. By Jarvis J. Williams. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, xiii + 207 pp., $24.99 paper.

Once limited to certain circles, dialogue surrounding how race, ethnicity, and diversity interact with the Christian faith has become increasingly commonplace in recent years. Across denominations, backgrounds, political affiliations, and theological emphases, such conversations have exploded within the church, with competing ideologies and interpretations dominating what are often unfruitful attempts at communication. Into this conversation comes Jarvis Williams's timely monograph, *Redemptive Kingdom Diversity*, which offers a biblical and theological survey of the diverse people of God revealed in Scripture.

Tracing the theme of the people of God from Genesis to Revelation, Williams outlines what he calls an integrated narrative of redemptive kingdom diversity, wherein we see God's plan to offer holistic redemption for diverse Jews and Gentiles throughout all creation. Central here is the idea that an overarching story of Scripture is God's intention to restore diverse humanity's relationship with himself. To neglect this narrative is to neglect not only one of the major themes of Scripture, but also a necessary corrective for contemporary conversations about race and ethnicity.

Scripture reveals God's desire for a "new multiethnic community filled with many diverse communities" that maintains ethnic distinctions while finding true unity through the gospel of Christ (pp. 3–4). God himself desires this kind of people and calls such people to live out this kind of kingdom diversity throughout the narrative of Scripture. To support this line of thinking, Williams provides a biblical and theological survey and then offers practical applications for Christians as citizens of the kingdom in our age that, while not solely about race and racism, seriously engage those conversations.

The bulk of this book overviews the scriptural teachings on redemptive kingdom diversity, as there are chapters on the people of God in the Pentateuch, in the rest of the OT, in the Gospels and Acts, in Paul's epistles, and in the rest of the NT. Throughout the Bible, Williams finds that natural ethnic identities persist and matter for those who belong to God's people, although these identities are not determinative for one's spiritual status or privilege before God. Rather, all of God's diverse peoples are called to a life of love and transformed lives in the Spirit.

This first section provides much of value for readers interested in discovering overarching messages concerning God's people in the various parts of Scripture. These make for a solid introduction to what the Bible says about redemptive kingdom diversity, though readers in want of deeper engagement may find themselves desirous of more interaction with other scholars or looking for a deeper bibliography.

After a quick chapter that synthesizes the biblical data of God's plan for redemptive kingdom diversity, Williams offers a long chapter on practical orthopraxy that summarizes his argument and offers applications of his reading. The greatest strength of this volume comes in this chapter as Williams offers a nuanced application of the scriptural message in the face of contentious issues. Those interested in conversations about how redemptive kingdom diversity may play out in an increasingly divisive world will find much worthy of consideration. This winding chapter offers numerous excellent and accessible ways forward, though on balance it stands as a beginning look at what redemptive kingdom diversity might be like in practice rather than a comprehensive plan or final word.

Williams takes a careful stand while engaging hot-button issues such as racism, classicism, and political identities with grace, humility, and conviction. Some readers will find themselves pressed by and perhaps uncomfortable with his applications, while other readers will think he pulls too many punches and does not push far enough on certain issues. But in this way, he takes a helpful middle path that advocates for a biblical perspective rather than a partisan one. Less helpful is that

Williams fails to engage many of the more influential voices on these issues. Given the constructive and practical nature of this chapter, however, this can be easily forgiven.

If you are looking for another voice as you piece together what Scripture says about the people of God and how that can inform our understanding of racial and political issues today, then *Redemptive Kingdom Diversity* offers an admirable contribution to the conversation. I found it to be a helpful tool for ongoing pastoral work in a divisive context, a book that calls the church to live out God's redemptive kingdom diversity rather than falling prey to tribal infighting.

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Figuring Resurrection: Joseph as a Death and Resurrection Figure in the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism. By Jeffrey Pulse. Studies in Scripture and Biblical Theology. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021, 320 pp., $29.99 paper.

Figuring Resurrection by Jeffrey Pulse is a recent addition to the Studies in Scripture and Biblical Theology series from Lexham Press. The series is committed to providing fresh, contemporary monographs while staying anchored to an evangelical perspective. The author, a professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, has provided a great addition to the series.

Pulse's stated goal is to recapture the identification of Joseph as a death-and-resurrection figure in the OT and Second Temple Judaism (p. 1). Based on his study, Pulse believes Joseph should not be viewed primarily as a moral or ethical example, an excellent statesman, or a salvific character, but rather as a death-and-resurrection figure (pp. 279–80). Pulse further breaks down the death-and-resurrection motif into twelve submotifs that support his thesis (p. 165).

Pulse conducts a narrative reading of the final form of the MT. He proceeds on the axiom that Scripture is a unified theological narrative (p. 4). In chapter 1, he examines the various methodologies that have been used in the study of Genesis, limiting his discussion to those developed around 1980 and after by Brevard Childs, Robert Alter, Jon Levenson, the scholars of the Scripture Project, R. W. L. Moberly, and Walter Brueggemann. Pulse acknowledges the eclectic mix of methodologies in use today, adequately reviews the major scholars noted above, and places his study within the field. In chapter 2, he lays out his approach to a narrative reading of the text and touches on his understanding of biblical motifs and themes.

Chapter 3 is the most important chapter in the book as Pulse conducts a narrative reading of Genesis 37–50 in the MT. At eighty-two pages, this is by far the book's longest chapter. This engaging chapter provides a wealth of content as it walks through the Joseph narratives and wrestles with and gives good answers for difficult issues such as the ascendency of Judah and Jacob's blessing. Throughout the chapter, Pulse highlights the twelve submotifs (repeated in chapter 5 with a little more detail) that he claims manifest the death-and-resurrection motif, shows how the MT lowlights Joseph as a moral exemplar (also repeated in chapter 4 with

a little more detail), and has an eye for any downward/upward movement in the text, narrative doubling, story mirroring, and various other motifs. Pulse's commentary on Genesis 37–50 provides strong evidence for the Joseph narratives as a cohesive unit that is well placed in Genesis and the wider OT canon.

In chapter 3, the reader may wonder if the twelve submotifs Pulse has identified are arbitrary. Chapter 5, however, establishes their use outside the Joseph narratives. Pulse's succinct development of the twelve submotifs makes an important contribution as it roots many of the submotifs in Genesis before the Joseph narratives (e.g., three-day/three-stage separation and restoration, Gen 22; stripped and clothed, Gen 3:21) and shows the trajectory of others. This chapter provides good evidence for the twelve categories Pulse believes manifest his thesis implicitly being used elsewhere in the OT. Perhaps chapter 5 should have been placed before chapter 3 to prepare the reader for the motifs highlighted within. Throughout chapter 3, the reader is pointed to chapter 5 for explanation (e.g., p. 70 n. 15 and p. 78 n. 35).

The majority of Pulse's book is consumed with his narrative reading of the MT highlighting the death-and-resurrection submotif, but Pulse's secondary aim is to consider Joseph as a death-and-resurrection figure in Second Temple Judaism. Pulse does this in chapters 6–10, but these chapters together make up only seventy-nine pages of the overall study. Chapter 6 compares the LXX with the MT and finds that the LXX preserves the thrust of the MT, showing Joseph as a death-and-resurrection figure. However, the LXX's focus shifts to Joseph's salvific role through subtle language differences based on what Pulse claims is the pressing perspective of third-century-BCE Alexandrian Jews (pp. 214–15).

Chapter 7 compares Targum Onqelos with the MT. Pulse finds Targum Onqelos "avoids explicit references to life, death, and resurrection … choosing to preserve these themes in an implicit way" and furthermore presents Joseph as a moral and ethical exemplar by improving Joseph's image (p. 250). These two comparative studies show little to no change is made to the death-and-resurrection motif Pulse has argued for from the MT.

Chapter 8 shows some emphasis in Second Temple literature regarding the motif itself, though not always explicitly, as Pulse notes concerning references to Joseph in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (p. 256). In chapter 8, Pulse argues that Joseph gained in popularity in the Second Temple period because the death-and-resurrection motif provided a tangible symbol from Israel's past that the resurrection of the nation was possible. The desires for deliverance and restoration were coupled with the desires for salvation and bodily resurrection, and it was the life of Joseph that symbolized this hope of restoration (pp. 260–61). Though Pulse has made a solid case for the resurgence of interest in Joseph in the Second Temple period, he shows few examples from these extrabiblical texts that demonstrate Joseph as a death-and-resurrection figure. The reader is left longing for more positive examples from the Second Temple period. In chapter 9, Pulse explores alternate uses of the Joseph narratives by Philo and Josephus, and a compelling excursus in chapter 10 shows the importance of Joseph's bones in the Jewish tradition.

Overall, Pulse has made an important contribution to the study of the Joseph narratives in Genesis 37–50, moving the focus away from Joseph as a moral, ethical,

and salvific exemplar to a death-and-resurrection figure. Furthermore, his study provides early evidence for the Hebrew conception of the afterlife that should not be taken lightly.

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Joshua. By David G. Firth. Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021, xvi + 425 pp., $49.99.

This commentary can be added to a long list of biblical commentaries written by David G. Firth. The central methodological approach is clearly stated in the series title, which focuses on biblical theology. Authors in this series examine biblical books and demonstrate how the theological themes of each book apply to the wider context of the OT and NT and how readers can make application for the church today.

The layout follows the typical commentary format. The first sixty-six pages of the commentary are divided into two sections. The first thirty-two pages cover the normal commentary introductory material (authorship, date, purpose, canonical placement, genre, and outline) with the only difference being that Firth devotes a section specifically to the thorny problem of violence in the book of Joshua (pp. 24–27). The second section (pp. 33–66) focuses on the broader biblical and theological themes of Joshua. Following this introductory material, the main portion of the commentary is set forth in a consistent four-part pattern. First the text of each chapter is provided from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). This is followed by a section where the author discusses the literary context of each chapter. The third and longest section handles the exegesis of each chapter or block. In this part, like most commentaries, the author breaks the narrative into its constituent parts and addresses historical, literary, canonical, and pertinent concerns. The final section falls under the heading of "Bridge" and allows the author to engage the biblical theology of the chapter. Here Firth "bridges" the gap of time and culture for the modern reader. In this section, he notes the major themes covered in the exegesis portion and how they can be used to form a biblical theology across the text of Scripture. It is also in this section that he discusses application possibilities for preaching and teaching. Finally, he provides a map of the tribal allotments (p. 270) along with helpful charts listing several of the cities assigned to each tribe (e.g., pp. 275, 313, 316).

For the remainder of this review, I will discuss what I see as the positive and negative aspects of the commentary, beginning with the latter. My first concern with Firth's analysis of Joshua is his failure to give serious consideration to Bryant Wood's assessment of Kathleen Kenyon's dating for the destruction of Jericho. To be sure, Wood's 1990 *Biblical Archaeology Review* article ("Did the Israelites Conquer Jericho: A New Look at the Archaeological Evidence") sent shockwaves throughout the scholarly community when he offered a viable argument for a fifteenth

century BCE destruction of Jericho. Firth merely notes another scholar's work dealing with an overview of the archaeological data on Jericho.

Though this is a somewhat tangential concern, Firth follows John and J. Harvey Walton's view that the Torah is "structured wisdom" "rather than a set of commandments designating specific actions" (p. 35; cf. p. 73). While some have adopted this perspective, it is best perhaps to view the Torah as not either/or but both/and.

Having noted these minor issues, the positive aspects of Firth's work far outweigh the negative concerns. Firth does an admirable job of handling the thorny issue of the Canaanite conquest and is fair and balanced in this regard. Indeed, he addresses the major concerns of violence in Joshua in the Introduction (pp. 24–27) and in the body of the commentary (pp. 134–39). His close reading of the biblical author's use of specific Hebrew terms along with the ancient language of conquest and the use of hyperbole helps the reader gain a solid appreciation for how the book of Joshua may have been originally understood. Even more encouraging is the fact that Firth rightly downplays the common assertion that the conquest of Canaan was genocide (p. 135). When addressing this topic, Firth adds copious footnotes—some of the most extensive in the commentary—to point readers to more detailed treatments of the subject.

It was also nice to see Firth addresses some of the newest research on the hunt for Joshua's Ai (pp. 146–49). Firth points out the work done by the Associates for Biblical Research at Khirbet el-Maqatir, which I have personally been a part of for a number of years. My only complaint in this regard is his failure to include some of the most up-to-date publications from the ABR team, and from Bryant Wood in particular. Wood has published several articles since the 2008 Eisenbrauns essay, which is what Firth notes. Even though I and others may not agree with all his conclusions, Firth does wrestle with the archaeological concerns in a fair way that allows for the strong possibility that the Bible is an accurate record of history as opposed to mere myth.

In this regard, Firth offers a thought-provoking analysis of Joshua's famous "longest day." He takes both the literary genre and the linguistic choices of the biblical author seriously. While he opts for a naturalistic understanding of the account, he argues for the historicity of the story with a viable interpretation (pp. 197–201).

Next, Firth does an excellent job of reconciling the problem between Joshua's incomplete destruction of the Canaanites (e.g., Rahab and the Gibeonites) and the command of Moses in Deuteronomy to destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan (pp. 225–26). His logical and balanced approach of allowing for hyperbole and ancient literary convention goes a long way in explaining the language and oft-proposed tensions of both books.

One of the more noticeable positive features of Firth's work is his handling of the second half of the book of Joshua. Firth goes to great lengths to give details about the locations of tribal allotments, the boundary cities and the meanings of their names, and the general geographical and topographical details noted by the biblical author. Some commentators tend to rush through these chapters, but Firth

takes his time and offers not just the details and specifics, but also the possible reasons why discrepancies appear. A case in point is his handling of the detailed description of Judah's allotment compared with some of the shorter descriptions for other tribes. His conclusion that the author may have been from Judah helps answer some of these differences (pp. 267–85). I also appreciated Firth's honesty when addressing how pastors should make application of certain portions of the second half of the book (e.g., pp. 283, 347). Trying to preach through the city and boundary lists of Joshua is certainly not easy.

Finally, I want to stress that Firth remains faithful to an evangelical and biblical theological handling of the biblical text and offers his readers much to consider for preaching and teaching this difficult book. Firth's work is very readable and is a welcome addition to the long list of other commentaries on Joshua, some by Firth himself.

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A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ecclesiastes, Volume 1: Introduction and Commentary on Ecclesiastes 1.1–5.6. By Stuart Weeks. International Critical Commentary. London: T&T Clark, 2020, lxxiv + 658 pp., $115.00.

Stuart Weeks has made a masterful contribution to Ecclesiastes scholarship with his monumental contribution to the International Critical Commentary series. Some of Weeks's insights into Ecclesiastes have already been disclosed at conferences and in journal articles and monographs. This welcome volume gives a full account of these thoughts and more for Ecclesiastes 1:1–5:6; the rest of the book is covered in a second volume. At the same time, due to Weeks's extensive research and the length of the commentary, he is able to make sense of the field of study, old and new, even "readings that have been ignored or rejected" (p. 4).

The 228-page introduction gives a helpful summary of Weeks's approach. With adequate reference to other scholarship, Weeks uses the introduction to lay out his own views and reserves more detailed interaction with other scholarship for the main body of the commentary (p. 3). The introduction is divided into three main sections: "The Presentation and Content of the Book," "The Date and Context of Ecclesiastes," and "The Text of Ecclesiastes."

Weeks's contribution is fresh, and in many cases compelling. In the first part of the introduction, he explores his idea that Ecclesiastes is a single unit composed of a brief introduction and conclusion by the author, with a monologue presented as the words of a Solomonic-style wisdom teacher. The progression of theme and style in Ecclesiastes is held together by common language and expression (pp. 10, 237). In the second section of the introduction, Weeks explores the issues of date and context, although he considers these important matters as not crucial to the interpretation of the book (p. 55). He spends considerable time on the third part of the introduction, which relates to textual criticism. He does so to include important work on the Septuagint in recent scholarship, to correct the neglect of the Dead

Sea Scroll fragments, and also to introduce readers to important issues of vocalization and of variants found in later manuscripts (p. 4).

Weeks does not consider Solomon to be the author or to be presented as the author of Ecclesiastes. Rather, he proposes that the author, who is unknown, intends to put his fictional character, Qoheleth, on a par with Solomon (p. 6). This means that the author can use Qoheleth (the character) to present ideas for reflection that he himself does not hold. Likewise, the "frame narrator," although not secondary, is also a character invented by the author and may also present ideas the author does not hold (pp. 9, 45). This makes Ecclesiastes "something closer to a dramatic performance" that calls for a reaction from the audience (pp. 9, 13, 55, 87).

Weeks sees in the development of thought from Qoheleth, a kind of "narrative dimension" that amounts to "intellectual development" (p. 19). He suggests that Ecclesiastes 1:4–11 embodies Qoheleth's "fully fledged beliefs" and serves as a prelude to the monologue that then traces his experiences and thought development (pp. 19–20). Human achievements are vapor, wisdom causes pain, and pleasure is meaningless in 1:12–2:2 (p. 14). In the experiment of 2:3–10, Qoheleth discovers that wisdom is vapor and wealth does not lead to profit, and he effectively questions the doctrine of retribution (p. 15). Ecclesiastes 3 begins another stylistic progression and implies that God's sovereignty removes human decision making. The consolation prize for humans is to enjoy life and do good (3:12; p. 15). Beginning in 3:16, new conclusions and observations are less structured. Ecclesiastes 3:16–17 shows that Qoheleth believes God will judge humans, even though he has previously summoned evidence to show this is false. Humans are misled by what they see (p. 16). Ecclesiastes 3:22 adds that people cannot see the future and therefore cannot plan for it (pp. 16–17). Chapters 4–8 develop these ideas and others: relationships, wealth, pleasure, wisdom, the fear of God, and the sovereignty of God (p. 17). Weeks considers Ecclesiastes 9 to begin a section of reflection, including the admonition to joy and the introduction of the idea of unpredictability (p. 18). Miscellaneous sayings follow in chapter 10, and chapter 11 further decries the lack of knowledge about the future, advises joy, and culminates in a description of a family death in 12:3–5 (p. 18).

Weeks suggests that although Qoheleth's ideas are not carefully structured, they accumulate to bring the conclusion that the sovereignty of God means humans cannot profit from their activity. They do not understand what they see and do not know what the future holds, which leads them to "pointless ambitions." Humans should therefore seek pleasure, while respecting God and trusting that he will act with justice (pp. 18–19, 54).

In Weeks's interpretation, the author has crafted both the monologue and the frame or epilogue. This removes the traditional explanation of a contradiction between the two. Instead, Weeks sees in the epilogue a somewhat playful warning against taking Qoheleth to his logical conclusion of despair. To summarize the epilogue, "Qohelet cultivated wisdom to the point that he was forced to an unhappy realization of the limits set on life: we should not do the same" (p. 45).

Weeks translates the key word *hebel* (KJV "vanity") as "vapour" in his comments and as "a complete illusion!" in 1:2 (pp. 14, 248). This word brings a kind of

unity to Ecclesiastes in the midst of a disparity (or development) of ideas (p. 20). Weeks details a variety of usage in Ecclesiastes with the common thread that there is "a problem of human perception or expectation" (pp. 24–25). There may be meaning in the world, but humans cannot perceive it and so cannot act upon it (pp. 27, 35).

Weeks organizes the commentary section into two parts: commentary and notes. This allows a readable overview, followed by detailed notes on specific verses and words. In the commentary, Weeks introduces a number of innovative interpretations that depart from most modern commentaries. One that was revealed in essence in the 2008 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature focuses on the 1:4–11 prologue. Most modern interpreters see a description of nature and human activity as cyclical and tedious. Weeks argues convincingly that the text is portraying instead the constancy of nature over which humans can effect no real change and of which there is no lasting memory. "Constancy is masked by movement" (p. 266). The wind does not blow in circles, the rivers do not return to their point of origin, and "speaking does not use up words" (p. 262). These things and others continue endlessly, but not cyclically.

Weeks also departs from a common interpretation in his translation in Ecclesiastes 2:1: "examine the benefits!" (p. 365). This phrase, literally "see in good" (*ra'ah betov*), is often understood as something like "enjoy yourself" (ESV) or "enjoy pleasure" (KJV). Weeks appeals to Ezekiel 21:21 (MT 21:26) for the sense "examine" to translate "see in" (*ra'ah b-*) and to Psalm 27:13 for the sense "benefits" to translate "good" (*tov*). For Weeks, the benefits are especially the "results of divine favour" (p. 372). This interpretation does not apply to the similar expression without the preposition "in" (*ra'ah tov,* p. 371).

The Book of Ecclesiastes is usually connected somehow with King Solomon, for example, as a commentary on his wealth. Weeks rejects this connection and argues against it with the example of 2:4–11, which describes building and planting, as well as amassing silver and gold and more. He laments that "many commentators … paint a picture of luxury and grandeur simply commensurate with Solomon's lifestyle, in which orchards become royal gardens, irrigation pools become lakes, livestock are quietly forgotten, and the whole passage becomes an account of hedonistic luxury" (pp. 390–91). Weeks finds such a connection "awkward" and rejects the idea that Solomon (or Qoheleth for that matter) finds wealth to be unsatisfactory in this context (p. 392). The problem being presented, as Weeks sees it, is that humans have no way to possess material wealth as their own; they are not the actual owners. Material possessions are satisfying, but humans "can never truly satisfy their desire for material possessions" (p. 392).

In Weeks's translation of the famous poem in 3:1–8, he translates 3:2 as "a time for birth," avoiding the common practice of taking the verb as a passive (p. 482). This allows the list to begin and continue as a representation of "a wide range of actions and events" (p. 490), rather than as the totality of human activity or one person's entire life, although Weeks considers the list to be representative of every action. He rightly does not consider the list to present choices between right and wrong, but actions that are subject to the divine dispensation (p. 483). Weeks no-

tices the switch to nouns in Ecclesiastes 3:8 (war and peace), but sadly does not offer a suggestion for the purpose of this switch (see, e.g., *Qoheleth Rabbah*).

The length of Weeks's commentary has allowed him to present the results of his exhaustive reading of the primary and secondary literature. He engages a wide breadth of scholars and offers accessible summaries of the state of scholarship, including areas such as textual criticism. His interpretations of the text are fresh as he has not accepted any received wisdom at face value. He is also willing to consider lesser-known positions. This volume stands with respect in the philological tradition of the International Critical Commentary series and moves beyond the technical detail with interesting and sensible new interpretations.

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Hosea-Micah. By John Goldingay. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Prophetic Books. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, 560 pp., $54.99.

Any commentary on the Minor Prophets faces a major problem for any commentator: how does one adequately cover twelve biblical books? One solution lies in splitting the Minor Prophets in half, a solution Baker Publishing Group chose for the Baker Commentary on the OT series (BCOT). After leaning heavily on John Goldingay for previous volumes in the BCOT series (Genesis, Psalms 1–41, Psalms 42–89, Psalms 90–150), Baker's prophetic series opens with Goldingay for this volume on Hosea-Micah. Goldingay knows the prophets well, having written especially on Daniel and Isaiah in the Major Prophets. Elsewhere, he wrote on Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah when he tag-teamed on *Minor Prophets II* with Pamela Scalise in Baker's Understanding the Bible Commentary Series. Hence, he comes in preeminently qualified to write on the six books of Hosea-Micah.

Goldingay follows BCOT's mission to emphasize the original author's rhetorical strategies and to write for a target audience "primarily of serious students of the Bible" (p. vii). BCOT positions itself somewhere between more scholarly commentaries and those more driven by application, as it seeks to enrich "readers in their own quest to understand Scripture" (p. vii). In keeping with this, Goldingay describes his own method as writing "what I had in my head and my imagination" with linguistic aids without reference to modern secondary literature "except when I was stuck" (p. ix). Goldingay iconoclastically remarks that "being the majority or being recent is not necessarily an indication of being right" (p. x). On the other hand, he regularly checks in on ancient primary interpreters of the Minor Prophets such as Luther and Calvin, an area where his work shines again and again.

Goldingay's twenty-page introduction takes what he calls "snapshots or collections of snapshots from a family album" (p. 3) from the Minor Prophets' corpus before zooming in to the larger portraits of Hosea-Micah specifically. His headings all describe the message-making ministry of the prophetic word. He closes the introduction by looking at the textual traditions of Hosea-Micah and at subsequent Jewish and Christian reflections on these six books. The introduction gives a good

written panorama but would benefit from more visual elements such as maps and charts to organize some of the historical and literary contexts for these books.

Each individual prophetic book receives its own introduction before Goldingay launches into the commentary divided into pericopes guided largely by the Masoretic Text and literary divisions. The commentary splits into four self-explanatory sections: "Overview," "Translation," "Interpretation," and "Theological Reflection." Footnotes run cumulatively across all parts for each prophetic book. Hosea, as the largest minor prophetic book, has a whopping 667 footnotes that largely support textual manuscript observations. This, along with Goldingay's conversational style, allows for an especially readable commentary where the focus stays on the biblical text itself rather than engaging in scholarly debate over the passages. He does not include any excurses per se but does pause along the way to accentuate rhetorical elements. Examples here include the way Hosea's call against idolatry splits into eight distinct idolatrous categories (pp. 22–24) or how the place names in Micah 1:10–15 each aptly describe Judah (p. 426). Goldingay closes each pericope with how a given application might apply today. His applications effectively extract the larger biblical principles and then funnel out toward modern analogs. Aside from an occasional quote, Goldingay stays largely in the conceptual realm, and the inclusion of more illustrative material would further strengthen these applicational sections.

From the overall structural perspective, Goldingay's work breaks down much like any other commentary. What most separates Goldingay is his creating his own fresh translations that center on capturing the underlying Hebraic base as opposed to simply producing an easy-flowing English translation. He actually began this translation work earlier with his *First Testament: A New Translation* that covered the entire OT (or "First Testament," Goldingay's preferred nomenclature in that volume and this volume). Both books utilize what Goldingay calls in *Hosea-Micah* a "quirk" (p. x): he uses transliterated letters for Hebrew names even where an original Hebrew name like *Miṣrayim* looks very different from its English rendition as *Egypt*. The preface of *The First Testament* gives the reader a brief transliteration key, but this current volume leaves readers completely on their own. In addition to orthography, both volumes make use of word etymologies. For instance, Baal becomes "The Master," again leaving the reader to supply the linkage. Despite these formal similarities, Goldingay did not rest on his linguistic laurels but reworked each of the translations from the earlier *The First Testament*. Hence, the reader has in effect two distinct translations from Goldingay on Hosea-Micah, both visually divergent from other translations.

Again, the difference lies in Goldingay's insistence to stick as close to the Hebrew text as possible even if it means losing some English fluidity. A good example of this appears with Goldingay's translation of "they don't pledge their paths" in Joel 2:7, where a translation such as the *ESV* has "they do not swerve from their paths." Goldingay explains in his notes that translations that use "swerve" falter from "tentative emendation and/or somewhat tentative philological arguments" (p. 214 n. 63). Yet he does little to clarify how paths might be pledged. Goldingay also can lock in on one specific meaning of a word. For example, the word *ḥeṣed* ap-

pears twelve times in Hosea-Micah, and in all twelve occurrences Goldingay chooses "commitment," rather than varying the translation by context as other translations do. On the plus side, few translations include "commitment" as a translational option, and Goldingay does well to include this word in the range of meanings.

Goldingay adds wonderful descriptive words simply not seen in standard translations. God's people "become a pita not turned" (Hos 6:8), the day of the Lord means "all faces have collected a flush" (Joel 2:6), "on every head a tonsure" (Amos 8:10), "They will drink and jabber (Obad 16), "People who take great heed of empty shadows" (Jonah 2:8), and "Now you're to squad together, Daughter Squad" (Mic 5:1). At other times, Goldingay favors a lesser-known word when a simpler word would do. For instance, he uses "hierodules" (Hos 4:14) instead of "cult prostitutes," and he repeatedly uses God "averred" when "claimed" would be more user friendly. Clearly, it would be inadvisable to go against Goldingay in a game of Boggle!

Goldingay ends up being the perfect scholar to take on the unique challenges presented by these prophetic books. Despite his eruditeness, he writes as much with his heart as his head, very much in keeping with the passionate voices of the prophets themselves. He writes for the educated layperson on the lookout for a commentary that can distill scholarly insights to better engage with the original prophetic message. On the other hand, he will keep even linguists dancing on their translational toes. His departure from other commentaries, especially his innovative translation and the lack of engagement with scholarly debate, means this commentary is better suited perhaps for the library than the classroom. But many readers will appreciate Goldingay's expertise in uncovering the rhetoric embedded in each of these six Minor Prophet books.

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How Scripture Interprets Scripture: What Biblical Writers Can Teach Us about Reading the Bible. By Michael Graves. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, ix + 230 pp., $24.99 paper.

The Bible is itself a record of interpretation. In his latest work, Michael Graves seeks "to *illustrate* and *explain* what we can learn about biblical interpretation by paying attention to how Scripture interprets Scripture" (p. 1) through the phenomenon of inner-biblical exegesis. The resulting book is part thematic study ("illustrate"), part hermeneutics handbook ("explain").

Chapter 1 describes reverent, expectant, and canonically sensitive interpretation; one should read with awareness of original contexts, hear the diversity of Scripture's perspectives, and seek a "coherent picture of what Scripture … has to say in addressing any given topic" (p. 2). Illustrating this, Graves offers a series of robust test cases focused on biblical issues: corporate or individual responsibility (chap. 2), "insiders and outsiders" (chap. 3), marriage, polygamy, and divorce (chap. 4), sacrificial offerings (chap. 5), and the afterlife (chap. 6). Each test case first ex-

amines the range of biblical perspectives (both OT and NT) before considering how these perspectives are in dialogue with previous traditions, interpreting them in their own unique context. Graves suggests that, by paying attention to the traditions' core values (or "core theological ideas" [p. 2]), divergent perspectives can be brought together into a canonically unified whole that finds fullest expression in the life and teaching of Jesus. The test cases bear fruit in the final chapter, where Graves makes several "general observations" (p. 176) and proposes a seven-step "process" of biblical interpretation, which Graves somewhat unexpectedly claims lies in complete continuity with "the basic approach that one sees in the best of classical patristic exegesis" (p. 186, Jerome's *Commentary on Matthew* is offered as support, pp. 181–85) and is second nature to mature readers of Scripture.

While the book's title and central claim could be read to promise a hermeneutics textbook modeled after the phenomena of inner-biblical exegesis or intertextuality, Graves's use of "biblical tradition" extends the connotation of "Scripture interpreting Scripture." For instance, on the topic of the status of insiders and outsiders, the textual allusion in Ezra 9 to Deuteronomy 7 and 23 is treated alongside the conceptual links of the book of Ruth to the same passages. Thus, when Graves speaks of "scriptural traditions," rather than promoting a study of intertextuality (narrowly defined), he appears to be doing something closer to biblical theology—an attempt to uncover the "core values" underlying biblical "traditions" (read "themes") that weave the diversity of Scripture into a canonical whole.

Despite the book's core claim, it begins with an interpretive guide (pp. 3–21, especially 7–15) that feels distinctly modern. However, Graves never claims that his method (my term) is the method of the biblical authors, but rather that Scripture is interpreted most responsibly when key "lessons" learned from Scripture itself are brought into harmony with the best of modern exegetical practice (p. 186). However, the distinction between *method of interpretation* and *lessons drawn from interpretation* itself is not always clear. Thus, no attention is given to inner-biblical interpretive methods that do not correlate so neatly with modern exegetical practice (for instance, allegorical or figural readings—one thinks of Paul in 1 Cor 10). What normative lessons should be drawn from *these* interpretive practices?

Graves's concluding observations admirably focus on the contextual nature of all interpretation, even in the Bible. The book skillfully guides the reader through the diversity of Scripture—both acknowledging the Bible's often-puzzling complexity and affirming its theological unity by virtue of its shared "core values." This is most clearly seen in the "test case" chapters, which brim with concise but thorough articulations of the Bible's diverse perspectives while refusing to leave Scripture in hopeless cacophony. This concrete demonstration of "unity within diversity" is the book's real contribution. Readers seeking biblical insight on important (and potentially spicy) theological topics will find their exegetical and theological sensitivities sharpened as readers and interpreters of God's Word. Readers seeking methodological clarity amidst the beehive of modern interpretive plurality will find this book insightful and focusing. Whether one is convinced by Graves's methodological lessons, all readers will appreciate the breadth and depth of his biblical en-

gagement and his creative defense of the notion of a theologically unified and legitimately diverse Bible.

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The Supporting Cast of the Bible: Reading on Behalf of the Multitude. By Gina Hens-Piazza. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2020, x + 117 pp., $90.00.

In *The Supporting Cast of the Bible*, Gina Hens-Piazza demonstrates the importance of recognizing, analyzing, and even empathizing with the people in the Bible that most scholars label as "minor characters." She points out that reading impacts the way we view the world. By ignoring these figures in the Bible, we create a hierarchy, or caste system, that influences the way we view and treat those who are less visible in our own society (p. 10). Instead of using "importance" to the plot or to the author as the main criterion for character analysis, Hens-Piazza uses more flexible parameters (visibility, time devoted to introduction, direct versus indirect discourse, and amount of space in the narrative) to create four groups of supporting characters: complementary characters, bit-parts, cameo appearances, and implied characters. She states in her conclusion that her motivation to create these categories is to promote recognition and organization, not to limit definitions that would support a caste system or hierarchy (p. 93).

Hens-Piazza spends the first two chapters outlining her methodology. She then uses the body of this book to focus on four examples of these characters from 1 and 2 Kings. She devotes less time distinguishing between the different groups of characters and more time on the methods needed to understand individual characters in their literary and historical context.

Some evangelical readers might be reluctant to use Hens-Piazza's approach, which she clearly bases on reader-response criticism with the repeated assumption that "every story is more than one story" (e.g., pp. 2, 16, 48). She claims that readers help reconstruct the supporting cast by bringing them to life with their own stories (p. 15). Such an approach risks adding to the text in a way that might take away from the overall intended purpose of the narrative. Hens-Piazza, however, responsibly uses a variety of modern critical methods in her examples to bring these different types of supporting characters to life. She uses the study of cultural and historical backgrounds to paint a picture of everyday life in Iron Age Israel. She analyzes the narrative with textual criticism to draw out previously hidden motivations and functions in the story, and with socio-rhetorical criticism to examine how these characters interacted within ancient Israelite society.

I would recommend this book for biblical studies students as they learn to use modern approaches and critical methods, especially for narrative and historical books in the OT. I would also recommend the book for teachers who would like to try out a new approach for understanding and developing different characters in biblical narratives. Although Hens-Piazza's methodology uses postmodern/reader-response criticism, her method may inspire students to enter the world of the Bible

in a new way, reading it as not just a story with literary characters to analyze, but as a reality with men and women living in a complex society. Her approach will also help students identify the "caste system" implied in narratives and recognize the importance of supporting cast members in their own lives.

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Getting to Grips with Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Textbook. By David L. Baker. Langham Global Library. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham, 2020, 218 pp., $25.50 paper.

Getting to Grips with Biblical Hebrew is authored by David L. Baker (Biblical Studies Lecturer at All Nations Christian College in Hertfordshire, England) and provides a simple introduction to Biblical Hebrew. Written as a textbook for first-year Hebrew students, *Getting to Grips with Biblical Hebrew* is specifically intended for "students who have never learned a foreign language or whose knowledge of English might be limited" (back cover). Therefore, English grammar knowledge is not assumed and key concepts are explained along the way. Moreover, the goal of the book is "realistic," covering only the alphabet, the most common words, and essential grammar so students are equipped to read selected passages from the Hebrew Bible, understand how translation works, and be better equipped to interpret the OT (p. xiii).

The front matter includes a preface, a note for teachers, and a list of abbreviations. The Hebrew instruction itself is divided into thirty lessons, intended to fit one academic year, although it could also be used in an intensive course. The appendix begins with excerpts from two ancient advocates for reading the Bible in its original languages (the prologue to Sirach and Martin Luther). The text of Jonah follows, formatted as a dramatic reading for use in class. The book concludes with a "Mini Dictionary" (glossary), a "Mini Songbook" that provides melodies and chords for the seven songs included in the textbook, and a bibliography.

The instructional approach adopted by the book is generally traditional. A typical lesson covers basic grammar with examples and paradigms, a set of twelve vocabulary words (mostly chosen by frequency), and exercises that typically involve memorization, parsing, and translation from Hebrew to English (almost all from the Hebrew Bible). A few lessons deviate from this pattern to address other important issues, such as using a Hebrew dictionary, Hebrew conversation, and eight readings of texts from the Hebrew Bible. Each reading lesson guides the student through the translation and interpretation of several verses from the Hebrew Bible using philological commentary and interpretive insights.

The early lessons cover some basic information about the history and nature of Hebrew while gradually introducing letters, sounds, words, and sentences. The verbal system is introduced systematically, beginning with the perfect and then working through the imperfect, imperative, participle, and infinitive. Regular verbal forms are introduced first, although a few common irregular verbs are included

early in the book. The derived stems are introduced late, after all the basic verbal forms. The author also includes scattered throughout the book a few traditional Israeli songs, like *Hinneh Mah Tov* (Ps 133:1) and *Hava Nagila.*

Amid the plethora of introductory grammars available, *Getting to Grips with Biblical Hebrew* does make a few unique contributions. First, by design, the textbook is simple, brief, and inexpensive. The author intends for the student who wants more depth and detail to consult larger grammars, listed in the bibliography for this purpose. Second, the author includes insightful tips and interpretive comments that are truly helpful and go beyond cliché. For example, the lesson on using a Hebrew dictionary includes two tables that summarize the prefixes and suffixes that can be added to Hebrew words, each in alphabetical order. The tables provide useful information for helping students remove affixes and thus identify the basic root of the word, which is then used for finding the word in a dictionary. A few other details also add value to the book, including the Hebrew songs and photos of various items with Hebrew writing, including some artifacts, each translated with a brief explanation.

While *Getting to Grips with Biblical Hebrew* provides a very accessible and user-friendly introduction to Hebrew, it also has a few drawbacks. First, because of its simplicity, it can only be used as a basic introduction to the language. As students advance, they will need to consult other introductory grammars and resources to fill in the gaps. Second, while the attempt to simplify the grammatical information is indeed helpful for a beginner, this sometimes comes with a loss of important information—like the names of the Hebrew vowels (p. 14). At other times, it comes at the expense of linguistic accuracy. For example, the author explains that a prefixed vav switches the function of the perfect and imperfect verbal conjugations (p. 77). Finally, although the textbook does include a few innovations, it largely follows the traditional, grammar-translation approach to instruction. This approach was replaced long ago in modern language instruction due to its limitations, but it seems to persist in the teaching of ancient languages.

These drawbacks notwithstanding, Baker has provided us with a simple, user-friendly textbook for Biblical Hebrew that will give first-year students an introduction to the language that is not intimidating or overwhelming.

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Judges 1: A Commentary on Judges 1:1–10:5. By Mark S. Smith and Elizabeth Bloch-Smith. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021, 690 pp., $85.00.

This commentary is everything one would expect from a Hermeneia commentary. Clocking out at 690 pages covering Judges 1:1–10:5, the authors note that they took twelve years to write this commentary (p. xvi). The series overview states that the series will not have "arbitrary limits in size or scope" (p. xiii), and this commentary shows the truth of that statement. This commentary is also interesting since it was co-authored by an archaeologist and a textual scholar who are married

to each other, and their partnership is displayed in the richness of detail provided in these areas. However, this expansive coverage does not extend to all areas, as the authors make clear that the structure of the Hermeneia series prevents them from engaging with biblical theology (p. 49).

The forty-nine pages of the introduction cover the usual introductory topics relevant for a Judges commentary. In regard to composition history, the authors are skeptical that Judges contains any Iron I texts, rather seeing the origin of the stories as "localized accounts that became legendary" (p. 21). These stories were gathered together into a text (3:11b–12:15) that "was developed by the northern monarchy to promote national identity and cohesion, to emphasize the importance of a stable (dynastic?) monarchy, and to legitimate territorial claims" (p. 24). Several subsequent editions of the book were developed in the south, leading eventually to postexilic deuteronomistic editions of 2:11–16:31. They argue that a monarchic deuteronomistic edition is unlikely for Judges. Finally, later influences include a prophetic edition and other postexilic influences.

The basic format of the commentary is as follows. Each section begins with a translation and detailed textual notes, which will be invaluable to readers who are working their way through Judges in Hebrew and studying textual criticism. The next part is called "Narrative Context," which is largely a synchronic study of how the section fits with the surrounding section and how the section itself is structured. The authors then begin moving through the verses themselves in the "Detailed Commentary" section. This section is the heart of the commentary, containing important grammatical points, lexical studies, historical geography, ANE parallels, and interpretive debates. Including the relevant portion of the verse in italics makes the commentary easy to follow. The final section is "Background and Setting," which focuses on the composition history of the text under discussion. For readers who prioritize synchronic reading, this section will most likely be the least helpful.

As an example of their approach, I will overview their section on Ehud (3:12–30). In the "Narrative Context" section, the authors show how the story revolves around the two leaders—Eglon and Ehud—and a variety of nameless attendants. They also note that the "story builds suspense by providing details whose importance is not immediately clear" (p. 213). In the "Detailed Commentary," they observe how the phrase "Yahweh strengthened Eglon" connects with other stories of divine control. For Eglon's name, they cite a variety of parallels and note how it "anticipates his later 'sacrifice' by Ehud" (p. 215). They provide half a page of literary history of Jericho as a contested place between Israel and Moab. Their translation of the phrase about Ehud's hand is "a man with a weaker right hand," while the description of Eglon is translated "Now Eglon was a well-nourished man." Attention to discourse analysis leads them to argue that the initial phrase in verse 19 is background information about Ehud's return because it is off the narrative line. The upper room was cooler because "an upper room might get a breeze better than a lower floor, just what the room could use later in the story" (p. 224).

About the possible sexual overtones of Ehud's dagger entering into Eglon, they say "while it is difficult to confirm or rule out such overtones, the sexual element is less explicit than the sacrificial and scatological scenes but adds another

possible entertaining facet" (p. 226). They do not provide a definitive definition for what came out of Ehud—their translation is "his excretion went out"—but they say "the composer hardly appears above bathroom-humor and mockery by allusion as well as a rhythmic prose phrasing to amusingly denigrate an opponent" (p. 227). The break of the narrative chain in the expression "and it was locked" is a mark of "particular effect and dramatic emphasis" (p. 227). Regarding the lock, they say it might be an accurate reflection of how locks worked or the story "may even suspend the realism of such details" (p. 228). They remain agnostic about how Ehud escaped, amusingly summarizing the discussion in this way: "The story leaves the details of Ehud's escape to the audience's imagination; there is no mention of this (com)mode of egress on Ehud's part" (p. 229). They provide parallels for Eglon as a fallen and defeated warrior, but note "he is ironically fallen from his seat, not a throne but a toilet" (p. 230).

The authors describe the origin of the Ehud text in this way: "Three basic stages in the story's development are evident: an older local hero story (embedded in vv. 15b–26) received its written form within the northern royal scribal establishment (vv. 27–29), adding a national perspective of 'the Israelites' in v. 27; and it was transmitted during the divided monarchy and afterwards, when it received its further deuteronomistic framing (vv. 12–15a, 30)" (p. 234). The story might originally come from the ninth century BCE when the Moabites expanded their territory. The story is not in the style of standard ancient Near Eastern historiography, so it "may represent a piece of 'courtly' entertainment" (p. 236).

As can be seen in the summary above, the authors are very detailed when it comes to the meaning of words and the structure of the text. They provide excellent close literary readings of texts, and they provide extensive interaction with evangelical scholars who have written on the book of Judges, such as Daniel Block, Robert Chisholm, and Kenneth Way. This is partly because they interact extensively with much that has been written on Judges, but treating the contributions of evangelical scholars seriously is something that readers of *JETS* will appreciate. However, at times, the authors cite so many other scholars that it can be hard to see which view they actually follow. They also do not address some broader literary questions, such as whether we should read Ehud positively or negatively. Finally, following the guidelines of the series, they do not address any theological concerns.

This book will certainly be helpful to scholars who study the book of Judges and will be essential as a reference work for them for many years in the future. The commentary is far too detailed and voluminous for most pastors, but will be useful for pastors who desire to know more about the historical background of the text and are able to read detailed discussions of Hebrew grammar, historical geography, and archaeology. In other words, if you are reading book reviews in *JETS*, then you are most likely the kind of person who would appreciate this commentary! However, it will need to be read along with other commentaries that address theological issues and application.

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The Manifold Beauty of Genesis One: A Multi-Layered Approach. By Gregg Davidson and Kenneth J. Turner. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2021, 210 pp., $21.99 paper.

The interpretation of Genesis 1 has been a point of contention among evangelicals for many years, with a variety of views being accepted. Gregg Davidson and Kenneth J. Turner acknowledge this difficulty in *The Manifold Beauty of Genesis One,* saying, "The richness and beauty of this story is too often overwhelmed by acrimony, with verbal wars fought over the appropriate interpretation of the text" (p. 3). In this work, the authors offer a layered perspective in which a variety of views can be simultaneously true. They present seven different layers, one in each chapter, demonstrating important points of contact and overlap with other views. Each chapter closes by dealing with a few possible objections to accepting that layer.

Chapter 1 considers Genesis 1 as a song that highlights the way in which the biblical material is organized. The parallel structure of the days of creation and the repetition of phrases in parallel days give a sense of rhythm to the text that is often missed.

Chapter 2 considers Genesis 1 as analogy. This layer puts forth Genesis 1 as analogy or allegory that teaches important truths, including but not limited to the idea that work is good, God brings order from disorder, and patterns of work, rest, and worship.

Chapter 3 considers Genesis 1 as a polemic against the variety of views held by other cultures of the day. The authors support this layer with other examples of polemic present in Scripture, with the plagues in Exodus as a central example.

Chapter 4 considers Genesis 1 as covenant. The authors present some initial clarification of biblical covenants before discussing other treaty documents in the ANE and early covenants in Genesis with Noah and Abraham before drawing comparisons between these covenants and a creation covenant.

Chapter 5 considers Genesis 1 as a creation temple. The authors demonstrate parallels between Israel and other ANE cultures regarding temples and cosmology. In this layer the garden functions as a sort of temple in that it is a place of God's presence and throne and is inhabited by priestly figures.

Chapter 6 considers Genesis 1 as a calendar. In this layer the Genesis story provides the rhythm of work and rest but goes further to establish "signs and appointed times" (1:14). The authors note the various ways in which the word *mo'adim* is translated in verse 14 and how its appearance in the Pentateuch is "always in the context of a gathering at a set time or place" (p. 134).

Chapter 7 considers Genesis 1 from the perspective of the land, specifically the preparation of Eden for humanity. This layer draws comparisons between Adam and Israel in their kingly and priestly responsibilities as well as creation and Israel's experience.

This book has several strengths, but two stand out as the most important. First, the authors offer a perspective on the different interpretations held by evangelicals that promotes discussion instead of debate. All the views they present are represented in evangelical thought and the approach of layers allows the reader to see points of contact and overlap that provide a better understanding of different

views. Second, although the book deals with complex issues of interpretation, it is written in such a way that readers of various levels and depths of knowledge can understand and benefit from it.

One drawback is that the engagement with objections at the end of each chapter is brief. The brevity of these sections could lead to the idea that the objections are being handled superficially; however, the length and purpose of the book prohibit deeper engagement with objections.

This book would be an excellent additional reading resource for students taking OT theology courses or OT survey courses because it provides a general overview of the variety of views held among evangelicals.

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Performing Early Christian Literature: Audience Experience and Interpretation of the Gospels. By Kelly R. Iverson. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021, x + 230 pp., $99.99.

Performance Criticism (PC) has been an emerging and developing approach to biblical studies for the last three decades. However, its influence both within and outside the scholarly community remains largely limited (p. 12). Kelly Iverson attempts to change this in his latest work, *Performing Early Christian Literature: Audience Experience and Interpretation of the Gospels*. Specifically, *PECL* aims to differentiate between hearing and seeing a performance (an ancient oral reading of the Gospels to a community of listeners) from a modern, private reading experience of the Gospels (p. 5). Iverson examines the role of the audience and the factors that influence audiences in the communal event of the performance. These issues have often been ignored in biblical studies (p. 5).

Chapter 1 introduces Iverson's purpose and methodology. Here Iverson articulates that he "will consider various aspects of the performer–audience relationship for the purposes of understanding how emotions, nonverbal communication, and memory shape interpretation in an oral event" (p. 13). In addition to a concluding chapter, the discussion of emotions, nonverbal communication, and memory make up the remaining sections of the book.

In his analysis, Iverson says he draws from a host of disciplines, which include theater, film studies, performance, communication, and the cognitive sciences (p. 14). Iverson's study neglects the ancient rhetoricians such as Quintilian, who frequently addressed and discussed aspects of emotions and the audience-performer relationship. The index reveals that less than a dozen ancient sources were consulted in his research (p. 220). These sources reveal valuable insight into the oral environment of the first century.

Chapter 2, "Foundations of Audience Experience," primarily considers basic aspects of a performative reading of a text that distinguish it from individual, silent reading of a text. These aspects of a performance event are first, the spatial proximity between performer and audience, allowing for a range of experiences that a

spectator may be subject to, such as seeing the gestures and facial expressions of the performer. Second, in a performance, individual interpretation is shaped in part, by intra-audience interaction, such as a crowd's laughter at points in the recitation. Third, for the reader, the relative permanence of a book allows the individual to possess almost complete autonomy over the act of reading, such as control over the speed at which the material is processed. This is not possible in a live performative hearing of a text. Finally, unlike the reader of a text, audiences see and hear its performance.

Chapter 3 discusses the emotional experience of an audience at a performance event. Initially Iverson notes the neglect of emotions in the history of NT scholarship (p. 53). While Iverson footnotes several biblical scholars who have studied the emotional impact a spoken text has on an audience, missing are studies on emotions where foundational work has been done on biblical and extrabiblical texts. Such studies include those on emotions and performance, such as Angela Kim Harkins, "Ritualizing Jesus' Grief at Gethsemane" (*JSNT* 41.2 [2018]: 177–203) and "The Performative Reading of the Hodayot: The Arousal of Emotions and the Exegetical Generation of Texts" (*JSP* 21.2 [2011]: 55–71). A second category involves studies on emotions in ancient rhetoric, for instance, David A. deSilva, *Seeing Things John's Way: The Rhetoric of the Book of Revelation* (Louisville: WJK, 2009). Note as well studies on emotions and mirror neurons, such as David Seal, *Prayer as Divine Experience in 4 Ezra and John's Apocalypse: Emotions, Empathy, and Engagement with God* (Falls Village, CT: Hamilton, 2017).

In chapter 3, Iverson's focus is in part on the science behind emotion contagion or empathy that is experienced when a person experiences the expression of emotion by another person, including an actor in performance. Here Iverson relies primarily on Carl Plantinga, professor of film studies at Calvin College. Iverson also explores several ways that emotions influence audience experience, such as the spectator's attention during a performance (pp. 69–91). Examples from the Gospels are used to support Iverson's argument. For instance, Iverson contends that Mark's portrayal of the disciples as obtuse is deliberately fashioned to cause an emotional division between the audience and the disciples (p. 83). Audiences are to develop feelings of antipathy for the disciples in a performance of Mark.

Chapter 4 examines how nonverbal communication such as gestures and facial expressions affects audience experience and the interpretive process. Iverson notes that "unlike the writer, the performer possesses a variety of tools to enhance and clarify the communication exchange, including facial expressions, gestures, body language, voice intonation, movement, and so on" (p. 94). Iverson contends that because biblical texts frequently include references to nonverbal dynamics, it seems likely that a skilled performer might attempt to reproduce nonverbal elements described in the narrative. For example, when a text indicates that people were "crying out" (John 12:13) as Jesus traveled into Jerusalem, Iverson believes that many lectors would have used an elevated and impassioned tone while vocalizing the passage. He states that avoiding such inflections could produce an awkward delivery, "creating an unnatural disjuncture between the content and style of the performance" (p. 115).

The final chapter considers the role and function of audience memory in an oral performance. Specifically, Iverson discusses the use of quotations, allusions, and echoes. Iverson pushes back on scholars who note numerous cases of intertextuality, acknowledging that an astute reader may be able to detect a number of these references, but it is doubtful an audience would hear, retain, and identify each of the intertexts due to the cognitive ability of the average listener. A listener is not able to go back and read a text like a reader can. Iverson is right to observe that studies often fail to consider the performance setting and its associated implications when discussing intertextuality.

Performing Early Christian Literature explores several points of discontinuity between reading and performance. In this endeavor, *PECL* performs well. Performance perspectives can advance scholarship in biblical studies and should be given more attention in academia. In addition, the book will serve practitioners of the Bible as they preach and teach to their respective congregations, providing them with a historical context (the original performance) in which to consider in new and refreshing ways the text as it was initially delivered.

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Greek Genres and Jewish Authors: Negotiating Literary Culture in the Greco-Roman Era. By Sean A. Adams. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2020, xvii + 430 pp., $79.95.

Sean Adams presents a detailed study of Jewish literature written in the context of the Greco-Roman world from the early fourth century BCE to the early second century CE. For Adams, the use of genres during this period was not only a literary activity, but also an identity-shaping activity for Jews working out their place within the Greco-Roman world. Adams's book contributes to a growing body of scholarship that seeks to understand early Jewish and Christian writings within Greco-Roman literary culture. See, for example, Helen Bond, *The First Biography of Jesus: Genre and Meaning in Mark's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020); Robyn Faith Walsh, *The Origins of Early Christian Literature: Contextualizing the New Testament within Greco-Roman Literary Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Adams posits that certain Jewish authors wrote in Greek genres as a function of their engagement with Hellenistic culture and education. Adams shows how various Jewish authors adopted and integrated Greek (and, in some cases, other—like Egyptian) literary forms and conventions with traditional Jewish literary features and motifs. By writing "Jewish ideas in Greek form," these authors "engage[d] in acts of cultural translation" (p. 309). That is, their genre choices were not only literary acts but also a deeply ideological acts that conveyed either alignment with or subversion of the dominant culture (p. 16). Adams builds this thesis meticulously and steadily throughout the book.

The book has nine chapters, an introduction and conclusion with seven intervening chapters that present a genre-by-genre discussion. The introductory chapter lays out Adams's approach. First, he views genres as *cultural* in that they comprise a

system of relationships within a historical, geographical, social, educational, and literary context. Adams proposes a "genre hierarchy" at work within the Greco-Roman world, by which certain genres attain a "dominant literary position" (p. 12). Central to Adams's argument is that certain genres were associated with Greek culture (like epic and tragedy), while others were common (like commentary and history—and, by extension, biography). Additionally, Adams views genres as *flexible* and *functional,* and explains these characteristics theoretically with prototype theory and Derrida's idea of participation. On one hand, he insists that genres are prototypical models that exist "within the mind of an author … through core literary examples" (p. 13) and that "relate to societal understandings" (p. 14). On the other hand, he insists that texts may "participate" in multiple genres. In Adams's estimation, this mix of specificity and flexibility allows writers to adapt genres for particular aims.

The seven chapters that follow are the heart of the book. In them, Adams covers a wide range of literary genres, including epic poetry (chap. 2), other poetry (chap. 3), didactic literature (chap. 4), philosophical treatises (chap. 5), novels (chap. 6), histories (chap. 7), and biographies (chap. 8). Within each chapter, Adams groups writings based on their similar literary features. Readers will appreciate not only Adams's careful attention to detail in his analysis of primary literature, but also his ability to evaluate the literary material he amasses to synthesize a coherent line of reasoning and pull it like a thread throughout the whole book.

For instance, Adams discusses Philo's and Theodotus's use of epic poetry to tell the Jewish history and Ezekiel the Tragedian's use of tragedy to tell the story of the Exodus. In his analysis, Adams shows how these writers use literary forms, vocabulary, and values of the "dominant culture" (pp. 19, 29), and he argues that they do so actively to engage in "cultural negotiation" (p. 36). As another example, Adams concludes that "Pseudo-Phocylides aligns Greek virtues with Jewish moral precepts," thereby enabling "a way for Jews to accommodate certain aspects of Hellenism" (p. 84). Adams suggests that Jewish writers such as these present Jewish ideas and content in a Greek way to convey the integration of Jewish and Greek culture.

This volume is a treasure trove of information and a model for how to build an argument. Throughout, Adams offers insightful textual analysis to support his thesis that writers use texts in social contexts to form cultural identity. These are what I consider to be the most significant contributions of the book. Nevertheless, Adams's work is open to critique, especially on methodological grounds.

First, Adams's initial account of prototype theory rightly suggests that he views genre as a conceptual representation according to the cognitive theory he proposes to adopt; however, he often seems to forget that a prototype is not a literary model per se. Moreover, it is not always clear who has the prototypical model—the ancient author or the interpreter. For example, Adams assumes the genre "rewritten Scripture," its prototypical members, and outliers. He comments that "for rewritten Scripture, texts such as Jubilees, Chronicles, and others form the center from which other examples radiate," and he concludes that Joseph and Aseneth lies on the periphery (p. 180). Adams does not demonstrate, however, who in the an-

cient world would have recognized such a genre or the texts he groups as its prototypical members.

Second, Adams's use of "participation" to explain the flexible nature of genres is contradictory: "a literary work does not belong to a genre, but *participates* in it, being historically, geographically, and rhetorically *situated*" (p. 9, my emphasis). In "The Law of Genre," Derrida uses the phrase "participation without belonging" to communicate the instability and autonomy of texts and to insist that a work participates in a genre without ever belonging to it. Adams, however, seems to use "participation" more like a theory of family resemblance, allowing him to say that works such as Joseph and Aseneth or 3 Maccabees or Hebrews are radial extensions of more than one genre. This concept of "participation" does not easily sit with Adams's insistence that genres matter in the ancient world and that literary works are situated and, therefore, to some degree constrained. This does not mean Adams should eschew the idea of participation; but it does mean the concept requires some explanation or at least some nuance.

Third, Adams rightly views prototype theory as "a theoretical underpinning for literary blending" (p. 13), but he insufficiently describes blending as a "layering" concept rather than a synthesizing one. For example, he proposes that "multiple literary prototypes [come] from multiple cultures," which "highlights their unique features and allows for a multi-layered reading" (p. 163). Throughout the book, Adams carefully identifies the layers of the compositions he analyses. But conceptual blending is about the recognition of elements from two prototypes joining in a new, emergent whole. It helps us to recognize that Don Quixote is a *novel*, rather than something that "participates" in a picaresque and in a romance. It may help us recognize that Hebrews "participates" in letter and sermon not only in a multilayered way, but in a way that produces something that is more than the sum of its parts. I wonder what insights Adams might have generated had he had fully utilized blending theory.

Fourth, Adams's argument that Jewish authors write in Greek genres is clearer in his discussions of those genres recognizably associated with Greek culture (epic poetry and tragedy). Since, as Adams argues, historiography is not a new genre, it is less clear in every instance whether Jewish historians and biographers are adopting a Greek genre, or in some instances incorporating Hellenistic literary features into their texts, or in others envisioning Jewish (or other) genres analogous to Greco-Roman ones. For example, Adams demonstrates that Josephus and Philo clearly show awareness of Greek literary forms, compositional practices, and content; but that the writer of Mark's Gospel does not. Significantly, Adams's discussion of the four Gospels revolves around their divergence from Greco-Roman forms without sufficiently addressing the writers' aims. Considering Adams's thesis, his discussion raises questions in my mind about the extent to which the Gospel writers are indeed writing in Greek genres to negotiate literary culture in the Greco-Roman world.

Notwithstanding these critiques, Adams's work is a must-read for anyone investigating the writing and reception of Jewish and Christian literature. He presses

us to see that we can no longer understand these texts as mere literary works. They are also social and cultural phenomena.

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The Beatitudes through the Ages. By Rebekah Eklund. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021, 346 pp., $35.00.

The title says it all: here is a full-length monograph devoted solely to tracing how these few verses in Matthew (5:1–12) and Luke (6:20–26) have been interpreted throughout the history of the church. Technically, Eklund's work constitutes a reception history (German *Wirkungsgeschichte*)—a study of the "effects" the Beatitudes have produced in readers throughout history. That is, how have the Beatitudes affected its interpreters over the course of two millennia? The range of interpreters she cites is truly astounding; they range, as she puts it, from Origen to Billy Graham to Dhuoda of Septimania (d. 843, a noble laywoman from southern France), and includes women and men, from East and West and the global South. But Eklund's goal is not only to catalogue how the Beatitudes have impacted prior readers, but also how these traditional interpretations may inform how we understand them today. In her words, "I cannot understand the Beatitudes in the abstract, apart from those contexts," by which she means the historical locations (time, place, language, culture) in which the Beatitudes have been understood throughout history. This task is crucial, Eklund goes on to say, because how our predecessors understood the Beatitudes helps us understand how they might speak to us in our very different circumstances. Whether this implies that biblical texts can have multiple meanings is an issue Eklund does not address directly, though she shows that premodern interpreters were comfortable with positing multiple meanings for a text.

Eklund serves as associate professor of theology at Loyola University Maryland, where she teaches Scripture, theology, and ethics—arenas that clearly equip her well to undertake this project. In chapter 1 she tackles six basic questions that have occupied interpreters throughout the centuries: (1) Are Matthew's and Luke's versions the same, or are they different? (2) Who are the Beatitudes for? (3) (How) are they countercultural? (4) Are they commands or descriptions? That is, are they the entrance requirements for the kingdom, or are they eschatological blessings of the age to come? (5) How many are there? and (6) When are they for? For each question, Eklund gives us a foretaste of what will come in the body of the book—a range of options. For example, taking the second question, "Who are they for?," the range of answers are: for no one (e.g., dispensationalism and Schweitzer's interim ethic), for everybody, for all Christians, and for the orders of ministry—clergy or monks. She rightly prefers the "for all Christians" option.

Chapter 2 is "A Whirlwind Tour through History" of how the Beatitudes have fared in the last two thousand years. Some early interpreters found an order in the list of Beatitudes, a golden chain or order of virtues that build on each other.

Some settled on seven Beatitudes and saw significance in that perfect number (akin to the seven petitions in the Lord's Prayer and the gifts of the Spirit), but, with most, Eklund opts for eight. Later in history, the significance of personal spirituality and social justice became dominant. She also raises the question of the role of grace. Are these God's actions or ours? Can we attain these traits or are they impossible ideals?

In the remainder of the book, chapters 3–10, Eklund works through the eight beatitudes. She follows Matthew's order, inserting Luke's renditions where appropriate. These chapters are truly remarkable achievements. Who knew the range of answers that readers have given for each beatitude? Taking the first one, who are the poor in spirit or the poor in Spirit (Matthew)? Or are they literally poverty-stricken (Luke)? Are they the ones crushed in their spirits: the oppressed? Are *all* the poor blessed? Is the blessing for the poor themselves or those who aid the poor? What are the dangers of wealth? Can no wealthy person inherit the kingdom? Is the beatitude a call to voluntary poverty—the renunciation of all worldly good for Christ's sake, with only those who respond to this call finding God's blessing? Can "poor" be understood as detachment from the lure of wealth, or even imply the right use of wealth? Does one need not be literally poor, only "willing to be poor" (whatever that means)? Does inheritance of the kingdom mean fulfillment in this life (present reward) or is the promised kingdom a future reality? Can it be *both*—the kingdom has dawned but is not yet fulfilled? And to return to a question posed in chapter 2, does God produce this quality in a person or is this the result of human striving? Can poverty of spirit be achieved in this life, or is it an impossible ideal—a target to aim for but which can never be realized?

Eklund takes up each of these questions, and others, demonstrating the dizzying range of ways interpreters have understood the various problems resident in the first beatitude. She goes so far as to say that "this beatitude has generated a confusing proliferation of meanings" and "some of these interpretations appear to be in direct conflict with one another" (pp. 95–96). Part of the confusion surrounding this first beatitude originates, of course, from the two versions recorded in Matthew and Luke ("poor in (S)spirit" versus "poor"). But that raises other questions: does one version supersede the other; do they mutually interpret, or even "correct," the other? Interpreters have their answers to each.

Another fascinating observation surfaces from Eklund's survey of the history of interpretation of this first beatitude: "this beatitude *means* (that is, *functions*) differently in different social settings" (p. 97, emphasis hers). She clarifies an important point, however, that needs to be emphasized. "This is not to say that the social context of these writers *determined* their exegesis, but that it influenced their applications" (p. 97, emphasis hers). To me, this point is crucial: whatever Jesus (and the Evangelists) may have *meant* by their original words, clearly interpreters through the centuries have struggled with how to understand and *apply* those meanings in their contexts—as we must do in our contexts today.

The author conducts much the same kinds of analysis with the remaining beatitudes. So, what does it mean to mourn, and for what? What about meekness? Is Jesus the paradigm for this? (Who knew that meekness first became viewed as a

weakness or deficiency in the eighteenth century?) What are the objects of hungering and thirsting: literal or spiritual food, or divine justice? Is it food or justice for oneself or for others? Who are the pure in heart, and how will they see God? What kind of peace does a peacemaker make—peace with God or with others?

Eklund provides a meticulous survey and analysis of the ways that interpreters have sought to make sense of each of these central pillars of Jesus's teaching. A crucial result of her study is that we can learn from those who have preceded us, even the "pre-critical" exegetes, not to mention those in other social, religious, cultural, and language groups than our own and beyond the domain of the so-called experts.

But do not get the impression that this book is a dry catalogue of options and their advocates. Eklund shows how we must engage the meanings of Jesus's words. We see not merely how the Beatitudes have impacted different types of peoples through the ages (scholars, martyrs, theologians, songwriters), but why she deems their interpretations worthy of attention for Christians today. We see why Jesus's words matter, and why we need to take them seriously—as people have done since they were first uttered and then recorded in the Gospels.

Any teacher or preacher of the Beatitudes will greatly profit from Eklund's careful study. It's a rich and unique feast that should not be overlooked, whatever other resources one might have in commentaries or specialized studies on the Sermon on the Mount. At the same time, readers should be alert to the danger of concluding that any interpretation of the Beatitudes is just as good as any other one—as if we can pick or choose the ones we like. We can learn from how others' historical contexts may have influenced their interpretations and then determine to be vigilant in seeing how our own situations influence our interpretations.

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An Encomium for Jesus: Luke, Rhetoric, and the Story of Jesus. By Jerome H. Neyrey. New Testament Monographs 40. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2020, x + 222 pp., $65.00.

Jerome H. Neyrey is a prolific NT scholar known for his use of social-scientific methods and attention to cultural backgrounds. His immense body of work features studies arguing that the Gospels of Matthew (*Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998], 90–162) and John ("Encomium versus Vituperation: Contrasting Portraits of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 126.3 [2007]): 529–52) utilize the rhetorical form of an encomium, and this monograph argues the same claim about Luke. In exploring the concept of encomium in Luke, Neyrey returns to the text examined in one of his earliest books (*The Passion according to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1985]) and builds upon recent works by Michael Martin and Mikeal Parsons that discuss the influence of *progymnasmata* on Luke.

The first chapter introduces the concept of encomium and its relevance for Luke (pp. 1–17). Neyrey believes that Luke's style reveals an educated background,

with the education of the time involving exercises found in handbooks called *progymnasmata*. One genre appearing in the *progymnasmata* is the encomium, which seeks to bring honor and praise to a figure through certain topics: origins, nurture and training, accomplishments, and a noble death. Neyrey attempts to prove the same template appears in Luke in the next seven chapters by studying these topics in ancient sources and Luke.

The theme of origins is the subject of the second chapter (pp. 18–28). Neyrey shows the importance of the location of one's birth (geographical honor) and lineage (generational honor) along with miraculous events at the time of one's birth in the works of Theon, Hermogenes, and Apthonius as well as comments from figures such as Quintilian, Menander Rhetor, Aristotle, and Plutarch. He then traces all three ideas in Luke, with a chart on p. 27 laying out where they appear in Luke as well as Matthew.

Neyrey moves to the topic of nurture and training in chapter 3 (pp. 29–49). He notes the variation on this element among ancient writers before examining Luke 2:41–52, which does not use the technical language of an encomium but addresses the same theme. This passage and its wider context shows the "precociousness" of Jesus, as he has knowledge of the Law at the age of twelve but learns obedience in the family until he reaches full adulthood and begins his ministry at age thirty.

Chapter 4 (pp. 40–83) introduces and commences an investigation of accomplishments that encompasses four chapters. While an encomium commonly highlights "deeds of the body," "deeds of the fortune," and "deeds of the mind," Neyrey only finds the "deeds of the mind" (which he also calls "deeds of the soul" on p. 13) developed in Luke. This category of accomplishments involves Plato's four virtues (wisdom, justice, courage, and self-control), with these virtues often described rather than explicitly named. After that preliminary discussion, the chapter examines how wisdom was understood in sources such as Aristotle and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and distills six traits discussed in three qualities that are less abstract: discerning good and evil, recognizing places of wisdom, and possessing foresight. Neyrey then surveys these attributes in the words and actions of the Lukan Jesus.

The discussion of justice in chapter 5 (pp. 84–116) follows a similar pattern. Neyrey first examines ancient sources to see how the original audience would understand justice. The author then explores this theme in Luke, finding Luke to show Jesus fulfilling duties to God, nation, and family while at times challenging the interpretation of them by the scribes and Pharisees. Included in this chapter is a lengthy discussion of the Sermon on the Plain (pp. 88–109).

Chapter 6 turns to the theme of courage (pp. 117–39), something that ancients viewed both as acting in the face of threatening circumstances and speaking out boldly. Neyrey discusses examples throughout Luke in which Jesus endures attacks from spiritual and earthly opponents and speaks boldly against institutions and values that do not reflect the values of God.

The last of the four virtues, self-control, is the focus of chapter 7 (pp. 139–61). There were a variety of understandings of it in the ancient world, but Neyrey

deems moderation as its key component and explains that this moderation leads to a control of emotions that comes from proper knowledge of one's role and social location. Neyrey sees Jesus exhibiting this characteristic in Luke, particularly when placed in juxtaposition with the Pharisees, who are consumed by desires for pleasure, wealth, and honor. When attacked or challenged, Jesus's responses reveal his proper understanding of who he is and do not feature anger or lack of control.

The eighth and final chapter of the work discusses the topic of noble death (pp. 162–92). A noble death was beneficial, voluntary, virtuous, victorious, unique, and productive of posthumous honors. Neyrey finds each of these categories in Luke's work, though he acknowledges the theme of beneficence appears more clearly in Acts than in Luke itself; use of Acts and parts of Luke outside of Luke 22–23 is acceptable as this material prepares for Jesus's death or reflects upon it.

The work includes an appendix listing various types of rhetoric, genres, and common topics in Greco-Roman works along with the bibliographic information of studies exploring their use in Luke-Acts (pp. 193–96). It concludes with a bibliography (pp. 197–206) and indexes of references to ancient works (pp. 207–15), authors (pp. 216–18), and subjects (pp. 219–22). The monograph does not have a concluding chapter reviewing the findings and implications; the closest thing is the final paragraph of the last chapter that states the work has proved its hypothesis that Luke was familiar with ancient rhetorical forms and wrote an encomium.

That closing paragraph reflects the strengths and weaknesses of this work. It features the thorough understanding of cultural backgrounds and ancient texts one expects from Neyrey and is clearly written, with many helpful charts and summaries and an unambiguous thesis; one walks away with a greater understanding of encomium and elements of Luke that correspond to that form. That said, it seems that Neyrey might overstate the certainty of his claims, as he at times says things like "there is no doubt" (p. 49) about the connection and has little interaction with counterclaims or alternative theses. He thus shows the potential connections between encomium and Luke without proving that Luke's use of this form is the best explanation of the data. While there are some passing remarks about the implications of the thesis (e.g., historicity of the birth narratives [p. 28], reading Luke 1–4 as a unit [p. 49]), this reviewer was left wondering why the connection between an encomium and the Gospel of Luke is so important and what difference it makes. These points notwithstanding, this book stands as yet another important contribution to NT studies made by this influential scholar and offers greater understanding of the text within its socio-cultural context, particularly rhetorical practices of the time; it reminds scholars of the continual need to define and evaluate ideas according to ancient and not modern understandings. Now that Neyrey has connected encomium to Matthew, Luke, and John, one can't help but wonder if Mark is the next place Neyrey will turn. If so, one would expect another intriguing work worth reading.

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Follow Me: The Benefits of Discipleship in the Gospel of John. Interpreting Johannine Literature. By Mark Zhakevich. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2021, 219 pp., $100.00.

In Gospel studies, there is a kind of hierarchy of biblical texts to which scholars turn in order to explore the concept of discipleship. Typically, the Gospel of John is *not* one of those texts. Instead, the Gospels of Matthew and Mark have tended to be the focus of most published works on the topic.

Francis J. Maloney, an important Roman Catholic Johannine scholar, reflects this view in the foreword he contributed to Rekha M. Chennattu's monograph, *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006). Maloney wrote that at one time he "had always felt that the powerful Christology of the Fourth Gospel left little space for a systematic development of the theme of discipleship" (p. xiii). Maloney goes on to write, however, that his views shifted based on what he considered to be Chennattu's well-grounded argument.

Along the lines of Maloney's earlier skepticism, this reviewer once asked his *Doktorvater* D. A. Carson, "Is discipleship a major theme in John's Gospel?" Carson responded with, "I don't think that discipleship is a key theme in John to the extent to which it is in Matthew and Mark, but I'm sure that someone could squeeze a dissertation out of it. How convincing it would be is another matter."

Two contrasting data points from the Fourth Gospel illustrate the angst regarding whether or not discipleship is a major theme. First, negatively, at strategic points in John's Gospel, explicit terminology related to discipleship is not found. For example, the Prologue of John's Gospel (John 1:1–18) does not contain the terms "disciple" or "discipleship." Similarly, while the word "disciple" *does* appear in the important purpose statement of John's Gospel (John 20:30–31), that occurrence is simply a passing reference to the Twelve and does not carry the imperative language of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) to "make disciples." Instead, the emphasis in John's purpose statement appears to be "life" that one accesses through "belief" that the Christ is Jesus.

Second, positively, of the four canonical Gospels, the term "disciple" does appear most frequently in the Gospel of John. In John, "disciple" appears seventy-six times, in Matthew seventy-two times, in Luke forty times, and in Mark forty-four times. Might it be, therefore, a bit short-sighted to argue that there is little data in the Fourth Gospel that relates to the theme of discipleship?

Mark Zhakevich, in a revision of his doctoral thesis written under the guidance of the late Larry W. Hurtado at the University of Edinburgh, intends to show that discipleship is indeed a significant theme in the Fourth Gospel, contrary to dissenting voices. In fact, Zhakevich contends that "the theme of discipleship pervades John's Gospel" (p. 3) but that the Johannine perspective on discipleship is unique when contrasted with the perspective of the Synoptics. According to Zhakevich, the Fourth Gospel explores not necessarily *what* discipleship is but "*why* an individual should follow Jesus" (p. 15).

The book's introductory chapter contains a helpful, but brief, survey of literature on the theme of discipleship in the Gospel of John, highlighting the fact that

recently much of the scholarly discussion on Johannine discipleship has focused on the character development of key individuals in the Fourth Gospel. One example of this approach is the recent work of Cornelis Bennema.

Zhakevich defines "discipleship" in John's Gospel as "devotion to Jesus, characterized by a continuous believing which is derived from rational and relational knowledge of the Father and the Son" (p. 1). This belief is "enabled and sustained by the Spirit" (p. 1), who unites the disciple in a "relationship with the Father and the Son with resulting expressions of commitment to Jesus such as receiving him, confessing him, continuously believing in him, following him, witnessing to him, loving him, and remaining in him" (pp. 1–2).

The six chapters that follow the introduction explore the various benefits that flow from being a disciple of Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel. Zhakevich contends that this is the Fourth Gospel's unique perspective on discipleship, when contrasted with the Synoptics: the Fourth Gospel explores the *benefits* of discipleship in some depth.

Chapter 1 explores the benefit of "membership in the divine family" (p. 29). Here Zhakevich examines passages in John's Gospel that contain kinship terminology, including terms like "father, son, children, orphans, brothers, his own, and little children" (p. 29). Chapter 2 reflects on the primary benefit derived from participation in the divine family, namely, eternal life. Zhakevich writes, "The benefit of life rises above other corollary benefits derived from participation in the divine family because of frequency and prominence" (p. 51).

In chapter 3, Zhakevich argues that "abiding with the Father and the Son through the Spirit is a second key benefit conferred on the believer" (p. 85), based on the frequency of "abide/abode" terminology. This benefit is a condition for discipleship and also promises further present and future benefits for those who abide in Jesus: "fruit, the presence of the Paraclete, peace, joy, answered requests, love, confirmation of being a genuine disciple of Jesus, avoidance of judgment, and the ability to perform great works" (p. 85).

Chapters 4 and 5 both explore one benefit of discipleship: "the promise of royal friendship with Jesus" (p. 111). In chapter 4, Zhakevich looks at royal friendship in its first-century-AD Greco-Roman context in order to demonstrate in chapter 5 conceptual parallels of royal friendship in John's Gospel. Zhakevich argues that John 15:12–17 in particular has clear parallels between the Greco-Roman concept of royal friendship and the portrayal of discipleship's benefits in the thought-world of the Fourth Gospel. Specifically, Zhakevich points out the words of John 15:15: "No longer do I call you slaves. … I have called you friends" (p. 111).

The final chapter of the book, chapter 6, makes the argument that the historical setting for the writing of the Gospel of John provides the context for this Gospel's unique perspective on discipleship. Zhakevich rejects the once dominant two-level reading of the Fourth Gospel, like that proposed by scholars such as J. Louis Martyn, in favor of the more traditional approach that Jesus and his followers faced real antagonism directed toward them by the Jewish power structure. In other words, Zhakevich argues that the story of the blind man in John 9 reflects a real event that happened during the ministry of Jesus, not an invented story meant to

express the experience of a subsequent generation of believers. That said, Jesus's promise of antagonism to his disciples and subsequent generations of followers is intimately related to discipleship, Zhakevich argues. John's Gospel presents the benefits of discipleship in the midst of antagonism in order to "incentivize continuous discipleship" (p. 155). The benefits of discipleship far outweigh any antagonism that one might experience.

A brief conclusion follows chapter 6, restating the book's claims, and the volume closes with the typical bibliography and indices.

What makes Zhakevich's book interesting is that it is not so much a study of discipleship, per se, but rather it is a study of the *benefits* of discipleship. In this sense, Zhakevich has made a valuable contribution. We can still conclude that Matthew and Mark tell us much about the characteristics of a disciple of Jesus, but we can add that the Gospel of John tells us much about the benefits of being a follower of Jesus. If this distinction is true, then Zhakevich has found a way in his study of discipleship to let John be John by maintaining the Fourth Gospel's focus primarily upon Christology and not primarily upon the characteristics of discipleship.

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The Politics of Salvation: Lukan Soteriology, Atonement, and the Victory of Christ. By Timothy W. Reardon. Library of New Testament Studies 642. London: T&T Clark, 2021, vii + 244 pp., $115.00.

Timothy Reardon's *The Politics of Salvation* provides extensive analysis of Lukan soteriology (Luke-Acts) by addressing the "theological preconceptions that obscure Luke's answer for how salvation is achieved" and presents what Reardon finds to be a "holistic and complete 'political' soteriology" (p. 1). The book is relatively short but theologically dense, with exegetical analysis placed alongside theological discussions. In six chapters, Reardon presents his argument for a Lukan soteriology that begins with the definition of salvation and concludes that Luke-Acts has a *Christus Victor* model of salvation. In chapter 1, Reardon proposes that previous readings about salvation in Luke-Acts contain anachronistic errors, like a false dichotomy between one's spiritual life and socio-economic life (p. 26). According to Reardon, the chapter highlights scholarly proposals for Lukan politics that challenge traditional views concerning Luke's ideology (p. 27). Reardon writes, "My thesis is that *Luke-Acts offers a complete, holistic, embodied, and political soteriology, cosmic in scope, that takes up space in the world and includes both the what and how of salvation, taking Christus Victor form*" (italics original) (p. 27). Reardon produces a refined *Christus Victor* model. He uses an Irenaean *Christus Victor* model of soteriology to help illustrate the doctrine of salvation in Luke-Acts (p. 28). For Reardon, Irenaeus's model does not contain a ransom or payment to Satan; instead, "Satan is conquered through Jesus's obedience … and 'persuasion' (p. 29)." Thus, Reardon backs a *Christus Victor* model of atonement instead of penal substitution, satisfaction, or other alternative atonement models.

Chapters 2 and 3 cover the Gospel of Luke. First, Reardon determines that the Benedictus (1:68–79) functions as a groundwork for Lukan salvation (p. 63). He examines 1:68–79 to establish the start of God's plan of salvation (p. 33). There, Reardon finds that the Benedictus aligns with the Irenaean *Christus Victor* model (p. 64). The foundation of Lukan soteriology—according to Reardon—is tied to cosmic powers, a social-political space, and God's unfolding salvific plan (p. 64).

Chapter 3 explores Luke 4:18–19, where Jesus presents the gospel and his ministerial aim (p. 65). Reardon states that Jesus announced that the kingdom and a Jubilee release had come (p. 96). Likewise, Reardon draws attention to the "reordering [of the] mal-ordered (bound-by-Satan) realities and space, establishing God's justness in the world and among people (and for the poor) through a cosmic-comprehensive and social-political salvation" (p. 97).

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the book of Acts. Chapter 4 examines Acts 2 and the spatial appearance of Jesus as the enthroned king and Jesus's followers as Spirit-filled (p. 99). What Jesus was proclaiming in Luke is shown as a present reality in Acts. Thereby, reconciliation occurs between God and his people, believers' bodies, and all creation (p. 131). Moreover, Reardon observes reconciliation as occurring both as "heaven invades earth" and the Spirit moves out from Jerusalem (p. 131).

In chapter 5, Reardon focuses on Paul and Barnabas's Spirit-led work and message of salvation found in Acts 13:16–52 (p. 133). He understands their message aligns with the Lukan soteriology (i.e., holistic and political salvation; p. 133). Reardon concludes that Jesus crucified is primarily about Jesus's identity, while Christ crucified shows that Jesus is just, not a payment for sin (p. 160).

In the conclusion, chapter 6, Reardon finds that salvation in Luke-Acts is more than salvation of the individual. It includes personal salvation plus salvation to "social realities, communities, political structures, and soon in the social-political and cosmic-comprehensive space in which persons are embedded" (p. 163).

The Politics of Salvation meets both the publisher's and the author's objectives. The book focuses on early Christianity's social, cultural, political, and economic milieu, accomplishing the aim of the series. Further, Reardon proposes a Lukan soteriology that is holistic, achieving his goal. The task of overthrowing current and popular proposals is challenging, yet Reardon's diligent work may force scholars of Luke-Acts and NT soteriology to reconsider Lukan soteriology.

Reardon contributes to our understanding of Lukan soteriology through the careful analysis of the narrative of Luke-Acts, which begins at the Benedictus. From within the Benedictus, Reardon establishes Luke's soteriology and builds the foundation for the *Christus Victor* model. However, at this moment (i.e., establishing the foundation), the argument requires support before he continues the case. Moreover, Reardon's thesis needs to differentiate between the prevailing Lukan soteriology paradigms and his proposed model.

Two major points for Reardon's argument warrant some critique. First, the evidence from the Benedictus for the *Christus Victor* model may support other soteriological conclusions—including models that support penal substitution or an individualistic salvation. For Reardon, the Benedictus proposes that salvation for all comes from covenant fidelity (p. 42). Further, he finds the Benedictus declares God

has released his people—not ransomed—from oppression (p. 39). Reardon cites the similarity between release from physical enemies and applies the exodus paradigm to "the context of Roman imperialism" (p. 64). Second, Reardon heavily incorporates the Jubilee as the background of Jesus's ministry (p. 76). Yet Reardon acknowledges that some question if the Jubilee "imagery is intentional or should have any bearing on how Jesus's mission is understood" (p. 69).

Additionally, Reardon combats a view of penal substitution that he portrays less than generously. He writes, "This [i.e., his suggested Lukan soteriology] salvation unfolds through the *continuity of God's action* for God's people. The Davidide does not come to 'persuade' God or to achieve God's forgiveness, but God visits through the Davidic horn to effect release and—as will become clearer in subsequent chapters—to *persuade* Israel to respond to God's salvation—not to offer restitution to God in order to achieve forgiveness" (p. 64). Those who hold an atonement theory with penal substitution need not say God requires persuasion—there is no obstacle for God's forgiveness—or that there is a discontinuity between God's plan of the OT and the NT.

Reardon's work positively contributes to the discussion concerning Lukan soteriology by highlighting a holistic salvation in Luke-Acts that is in continuity with the OT. First, he accurately identifies the presence of a Lukan soteriology that is in continuity with the OT. Further, the focus on the salvation of Israel, the Jubilee, and creation may be Reardon's most significant contribution. Reardon gives the most significant treatment of how the Jubilee may fit within Luke's soteriology that this reader has seen. Second, Reardon's proposal provides a holistic view of salvation, both physical and eternal (p. 167). His proposal avoids the pitfall of false dichotomies or incomplete sanctification models he sought to avoid.

Scholars specializing in Lukan or NT soteriology will benefit from reading Reardon's case for a *Christus Victor* model in Luke-Acts. As Reardon identifies, his model needs to be examined in greater detail throughout Luke-Acts, not just within four key passages (p. 168). Both supporters of and dissenters from Reardon's argument will find this work helpful as they consider Lukan soteriology.

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Johannine Belief and Graeco-Roman Devotion: Reshaping Devotion for John's Graeco-Roman Audience. By Chris Seglenieks. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/528. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020, xv + 262 pp., $104.00 paper.

Christopher Seglenieks's main argument in this book is that the Gospel of John, written to a mostly Greco-Roman audience, presents an ideal response of believing in Jesus that reshapes the Greco-Roman devotion to the gods in a way that is appropriate for Jesus.

In chapter 1, Seglenieks proposes to analyze the ideal response to Jesus in John's Gospel (which he calls "genuine belief") and compare it to the devotion to the gods in the Greco-Roman world in order to show the features of the Johannine

presentation that may have been familiar, contrasting, or challenging to the audience. Seglenieks distinguishes between the story level and discourse level of the text in John's Gospel, with the latter referring to the communication between the author and the audience. The significance of this is that in the story level, limited understanding of the disciples is acceptable to Jesus even though in the discourse level it falls short of the genuine belief that the post-resurrection audience is expected to have. In due course, the limited understanding of the disciples will arrive at the fullness of post-resurrection faith.

In chapters 2–5, Seglenieks examines the text of the Gospel of John to show that the ideal response to Jesus comprises *cognitive, relational, ethical, ongoing,* and *public* aspects. In chapter 2 (John 1–4), Nicodemus does not have genuine faith because he does not yet have sufficient understanding (3:10)—the cognitive aspect of genuine belief. On the ethical level, those who believe do the right actions (3:21). In chapter 3 (John 5–12), the apparent declaration of the final judgment based on works (5:28–29) reinforces the idea that genuine belief must include right action. Relationally speaking, the call to follow Jesus as true disciples entails a personal and experiential dimension of mutual knowledge between Jesus and the believers (John 10). At the public level, genuine belief should not be hidden but should be visible when faced with opposition (12:25, 42–43). In chapter 4 (John 13–17), the story and discourse levels become closer as Jesus's hour arrives (13:1) and the disciples are called to greater clarity of understanding, to a deeper relationship, to a more encompassing obedience, to perseverance beyond the cross, and to the risks of a public faith. In chapter 5 (John 18–21), the story and the discourse levels of the text are brought together to convey the final picture of the nature of genuine belief. Thomas's confession, "my Lord and my God" (20:28) is a statement of the genuine belief that the Gospel seeks to evoke.

In chapter 6, Seglenieks summarizes believing in the Gospel of John as a complex concept with numerous facets including cognitive (believing in Jesus's identity as the Messiah and the Son of God), relational (involving trust, discipleship, and being one with Jesus), ethical (through the calls to keep Jesus's commands to love one another and do right actions), ongoing (abiding in Jesus), and public (open acknowledgment of allegiance to Jesus and commitment to be his witness) aspects.

In chapters 7 and 8, Seglenieks examines Greco-Roman devotion to the gods from the first century BC to the second century AD, such as the Olympian pantheon, Asclepius, Isis, and emperors. He finds the cognitive aspect in these religions less central than in Christianity as there are no formulaic expressions of doctrine in most cases. Relationally, gods remained remote in most cases. On the ethical side, the gods were perceived to be concerned for human morality and justice, but there is no definitive code of ethical actions. As for the ongoing aspect, no pagans ever referred to themselves as the faithful—all that was required was periodic participation in the religious rituals. Ritual is one aspect that was not a feature of genuine belief in John but was at the center of all Greco-Roman religious activities. Ritual is minimized in John because Jesus's presence among his followers through incarnation and indwelling grants immediate access to him, making ritual unnecessary.

Chapters 9 and 10 compare Graeco-Roman devotion to Johannine belief and examine how the Gospel of John reshapes such devotion to be properly directed to Jesus. All aspects of devotion are intensified in John except for the ritual aspect. The cognitive aspect is not required of devotees in the Graeco-Roman religions but plays a central role in John—the uniqueness of Jesus as the one true revealer of God (1:18) and God himself (1:1; 20:28) necessitates right knowledge of belief. In the relational aspect, close and intimate relationship with Jesus is a major contrast to the Greco-Roman devotion as Jesus's incarnation and indwelling brings an unmediated presence of God on earth and thus differentiates belief in Jesus from other religions. Johannine ethics is anchored to a divine figure, significantly transforming the ethical concept of traditional devotion to the gods: Jesus expects his followers to keep his command to love one another, modeling it himself and enabling it through the Holy Spirit. The ongoing aspect naturally follows the cognitive and relational aspects and is enabled by the presence of a risen and living Jesus. The public aspect is also different since, unlike the Greco-Roman religions, the need for public allegiance to Jesus was explicit and costly. There was no sense of such exclusive allegiance to any single deity in other religions. While all these aspects are intensified in belief in Jesus, the ritual aspect is virtually excluded—the Last Supper is not even mentioned in John.

This book contributes to the study of the Gospel of John by offering a comprehensive analysis of various aspects of the Johannine concept of belief and by comparing and contrasting them with Greco-Roman religious practices. Seglenieks provides a summary at the end of each section and at the end of each chapter; so the points he makes become very clear through repetition. Seglenieks also regularly refers to his earlier discussions, which he organized into small sections with a numbering system to make them easy to find. This makes the book user-friendly and his arguments abundantly clear. Another strength of the book is its unapologetic presentation of a high Christology—Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and also God incarnate, and our response to him will determine our eternal destiny, either to life or to judgment.

There are a few minor caveats. In his exegetical study of John, Seglenieks organizes his sections mostly along the chapter divisions in John, which is not the best way to organize the Gospel of John, since chapter divisions do not always accurately reflect the structure of the Gospel. More attention to pneumatology would have made even clearer the differences between genuine faith and the Greco-Roman devotion, since the underlying cause of the differences between the two is the illuminating and enabling work of the Holy Spirit. Seglenieks emphasizes incarnation and indwelling as a distinctive feature of Jesus's identity and works; more emphasis could have been placed on Jesus's atoning death and resurrection—the most distinguishing features of Christianity. A crucified savior is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Overall, the book is a welcome and valuable addition to the study of the Gospel of John.

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Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World. Edited by Benjamin Schliesser, Jan Rüggemeier, Thomas J. Kraus, and Jörg Frey. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 460. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021, l + 621 pp., €154.00 ($175.00).

The twenty-six essays of this volume, all written in English, discuss various aspects of the city of Alexandria in Egypt during Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. The volume is the "initial spark" for a research project located in Bern, Switzerland, called "Early Christian Centers: Local Expressions, Social Identity & Actor Engagement" (Preface). Jan Rüggemeier ("Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World," pp. xiii–l) explains why Alexandria was "the hub of the Hellenistic world" in terms of economy, migration, science, literature, and philosophy, and why the multicultural encounters of the Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, and Christians living in Alexandria were characterized not only by prejudices and hostility but also, on occasion, violent riots. The bibliography on the beginnings of missionary work in Alexandria is up to date but incomplete.

Five essays are devoted to "The City" (pp. 3–95). Gregory Sterling writes about Alexandria according to Strabo (pp. 3–27); Balbina Bäbler about written sources and (scant) material remains, monuments (the museion and the library), and places of paideia (pp. 29–48); Barbara Schmitz on the information about Alexandria that can be gleaned from the Letter of Aristeas and the comparison between Alexandria and Jerusalem (pp. 49–62); Christina Harker about religious violence and the reports about the destruction of the library of Alexandria, suggesting, with R. Bagnall, that the demise of the library was most likely due to neglect (pp. 63–79); and Maria Sokolskaya on whether the Athenian Demetrius of Phalerum was the founder of the Alexandrian library, as claimed by Aristeas (pp. 81–95).

Six essays are devoted to "Egyptian and Hellenistic Identities" (pp. 99–226). Christoph Riedweg writes about "Alexandria in the New Outline of Philosophy in the Roman Imperial Period and in Late Antiquity" (pp. 99–106), surveying the content of *Philosophie der Kaiserzeit und der Spätantike*, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie 5.1, edited by C. Riedweg, C. Horn, and D. Wyrwa (Basel: Schwabe, 2018), concluding that the history of the occidental (and the Byzantine and Islamic) intellectual traditions "is completely inconceivable without due and detailed consideration of the pivotal role which Alexandria has played" (p. 106). Stefan Pfeiffer investigates who initiated the building of temples for Augustus in Alexandria and Upper Egypt (pp. 107–23) and concludes that the cult of Augustus was made to *look* as if it were established from the bottom up: "the veneration of Augustus as liberator in an alien temple was not as a voluntary enterprise [*sic*] as it was supposed to be" (p. 122). Sylvie Honigman writes on "The Shifting Definition of Greek Identity in Alexandria through the Transition from Ptolemaic to Roman Rule" (pp. 125–43), concluding that "under the Romans the privileged class intersected with only a minority within the social elites of the province" (p. 143). Beatrice Wyss discusses "Cultural Rivalry in Alexandria: The Egyptians Apion and Chaeremon" (pp. 145–63). Sandra Gambetti investigates what happened "When Syrian Politics Arrived in Egypt," focusing on "2nd century BCE Egyptian Yahwism and the *Vorlage* of the

LXX" (pp. 165–205). Her historical and political study aims to show that "the basic Alexandrian Yahwistic text was from Samaria and that to this text the *Letter of Aristeas* refers: this is the *Vorlage* of the first Greek translation, the Old Greek … for political reasons, the Samaritan *Vorlage* was questioned in the 2nd century BCE, to which the *Letter of Aristeas* refers, albeit in chronological disguise, defending it" (p. 203). Michael Sommer writes about the *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* and the tombs of the Egyptian chora (pp. 207–26) as a contribution to the discussion about the relationship between Clement of Alexandria and the Coptic tradition of this text.

Five essays are devoted to "Jewish Alexandria" (pp. 229–321), in addition to the Jewish presence in Alexandria as addressed in several of the previous essays. Benjamin Wright writes on "The *Letter of Aristeas* and the Place of the Septuagint in Alexandrian Judaism" (pp. 229–44). Jan N. Bremmer evaluates the riots in AD 38 when Greek and Egyptian Alexandrians attacked the Judeans, concluding that none of the explanations for the riots are entirely satisfactory and that without the arrival of Agrippa I, the Jewish king designate, nothing might have happened (pp. 245–59). René Bloch investigates the presence of Hebrew (and Aramaic) in Alexandria and concludes that while there is no reason to assume widespread Hebrew-Greek bilingualism, Aramaic-Greek bilingualism being more likely, "there were always some Jews in Egypt who know some Hebrew" from the Persian up to the Roman period (p. 278). Philo, writing in the first half of the first century AD, refers to Greek as "our language" (*Congr.* 44) and to Hebrew as "the ancestral language" (*Spec.* 2.41, 145, 194), and states that some people learn Hebrew as other people learn Greek (*Mos.* 2.39–40); his 160 Hebrew etymologies render it "very unlikely that Philo had no knowledge of Hebrew at all" (p. 273). Justin P. Jeffcoat Schedtler writes about "The Transmission of the Fragments of the Hellenistic Jewish Authors" from "Alexandria to Caesarea and Beyond" (pp. 279–302), discussing Eusebius and the *Praeparatio Evangelica*, the nature of Eusebius's sources, Eusebius's library in Caesarea, the transmission of texts in the library of Caesarea, Clement of Alexandria, Clement's libraries in Alexandria, Alexander Polyhistor, the earliest stages of transmission of the fragments, Jewish scribes, and the composition and dissemination of texts. John Granger Cook connects Paul's σῶμα πνευματικόν with Philo's *Quaestiones in Genesin* (pp. 303–21), concluding that Paul himself likely created the concept of a "spiritual body" rather than deriving it from the (later) alchemical or the philosophical (Stoic) tradition. The context of 1 Corinthians 15 and the tradition he shared with Hellenistic Jews in Alexandria concerning πνευματικὸν βρῶμα, "spiritual food"—"an object with a bodily nature of some sort that is not made of spirit"—implies that "Paul did not envision a resurrection body made of pneuma" (p. 321).

Part IV, titled "From the New Testament to Early Christianities" (pp. 325–542), presents nine essays. Samuel Vollenweider writes on "Apollos of Alexandria: Portrait of an Unknown" (pp. 325–44), discussing the references to Apollos in Acts 18–19 and 1 Corinthians 1–4, concluding that Apollos "remains an almost unknown wandering missionary and teacher of early Christianity, independent of Paul's team and yet connected with him in a collegial manner" whose ties to Alexandria are tenuous (p. 343). Jörg Frey writes about "Locating New Testament Writ-

ings in Alexandria: On Method and the Aporias of Scholarship" (pp. 345–65), with good (but incomplete) bibliography on the earliest history of communities of Jesus followers in Egypt and in Alexandria, suggesting 2 Peter (which he deems to be "very late" and pseudonymous) can be located with some confidence in Egypt, and concluding that if the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* and the *Apocalypse of Peter* constitute evidence of the Christian tradition in Alexandria, it was "a strongly Jewish-Christian one" (p. 364). Benjamin Schliesser writes about "Jewish Beginnings: Earliest Christianity in Alexandria" (pp. 367–97) with competent (but again incomplete) bibliography, concluding that the breadth of discourse in second-century Christianity in Alexandria can only be explained "on grounds of a prevailing presence of Jewish-Christian groups that formed in the 1st century" (p. 392). Enno Edzard Popkes's essay "The Interpretation of Pauline Understandings of Resurrection within *The Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I 4)" (pp. 399–411) represents the translation of a chapter in the second volume of his work *Erfahrungen göttlicher Liebe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, vol. 1 published in 2018); he concludes that the author of the *Letter to Rheginos* (NHC I 4) seems to have been "part of a religious and intellectual circle where contrary notions of resurrection could exist side by side" (p. 411). Wolfgang Grünstäudl writes about "The Quest for Pantaenus" (pp. 413–39) as a contribution to the study of Clement of Alexandria and his intellectual environment, whose allegedly last and most important teacher was Pantaenus. Thomas J. Kraus, in one of the longest essays of the volume, discusses "Alexandria, City of Knowledge: Clement on 'Statues' in His *Protrepticus* (chapter 4)" (pp. 441–85), investigating Clement's discussion of the representations of the Greek gods as pieces of art in temples and sanctuaries. Clement does not call for statues to be destroyed, nor does he mock them as works of art; rather, he unmasks their worship "as something void, senseless, and illogical" (p. 483), all the while mentioning famous sculptors and their artistic achievements. Kraus makes the intriguing, surely convincing, point that it was not absolutely necessary to know the precise origin of Clement's Old and New Testament references and allusions since his "intention of using εἰκών in connection with the 'true' and only God can be understood pretty well" (p. 482). Anna van den Kerchove writes on "Origen and the 'Heterodox:' The Prologue of the *Commentary on John* within the Christian Alexandrian Context" (pp. 487–501), as evidence for the transition in Origen's situation from Alexandria to Caesarea. Luca Arcari comments on "'Monotheistic' Discourses in Pseudo-Justin's *De monarchia*: The 'Uniqueness' of God and the Alexandrian Hegemony" (pp. 503–18), demonstrating *inter alia* "the presence of a 'Christianity' deeply rooted in Alexandrian Judaism" (p. 518). Tobias Nicklas discusses "The Martyrdom of Mark in Late Antique Alexandria" (pp. 519–42), a text that has never been translated into English (the Appendix, pp. 534–42, prints the text of one of the two Greek manuscripts, Codex Paris gr. 881 [PG 115, 164–69]), presenting the theology, the function, and the impact of this text. While not the subject of his essay, Nicklas could have connected the story of Mark's martyrdom in Alexandria, on the day after the Easter Sunday that coincided with the birthday of the God Serapis (*Mart. Mk.* 7–9), with the numerous Christian martyrs in Egypt of later periods, including the twenty-one Coptic Christians, migrant workers, who were killed

on February 15, 2015 on the Libyan coast, their stories dramatically traced by Martin Mosebach in his book *The 21: A Journey into the Land of Coptic Martyrs* (trans. A. L. Price; Walden: Plough, 2019).

The volume ends with extensive indexes of references, authors, and subjects (pp. 548–621). The book is magnificently produced as we expect from Mohr Siebeck, a few editorial infelicities notwithstanding (e.g., the top two lines of p. xxxv should have been placed on the previous page). The authors of this volume provide an entry into the study of Christianity in Egypt that is unsurpassed in scope and depth, demonstrating repeatedly that much more happened "on the ground" in Egypt and in Alexandria than we know, when Christian missionaries, pastors, teachers, and theologians proclaimed and explained the gospel of Jesus Messiah.

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Discourse Analysis of the New Testament Writings. Edited by Todd A. Scacewater. Dallas: Fontes, 2020, xxiii + 747 pp., $42.95.

Various schools of discourse analysis (hereafter DA) have developed since Zellig Harris coined the term in 1952. As the distinctives of the schools matured in the 1970s and 1980s, the methods that focused on intersentential links and relationships for written materials were adapted by several scholars to analyze biblical texts. Yet, despite a growing body of work applying DA principles to biblical material, DA remains at the periphery of exegesis. Thus, in the 30-page introduction to this volume, Todd Scacewater sets out the purpose of the book: "to demonstrate the usefulness of DA when applied to written documents, particularly the NT writings, and to motivate biblical students and scholars to study DA and linguistics in general" (p. 1). To orient the reader for the chapters that follow, Scacewater's introduction provides a definition and brief but helpful general history of DA and shows how DA has subsequently been introduced to NT studies. The whirlwind tour of topics in DA that follows may encourage the reader that there are rich depths to explore in this field, though some venturing into linguistics for the first time may find the very dense overview daunting. DA, like other specialized fields, is laden with technical jargon, an obstacle lamented by Thomas W. Hudgins and J. Gregory Lawson in their chapter on Philippians (p. 361). However, the plethora of insights in this book ought to serve as an effective balm against terminological headaches.

This book is already lengthy but, considering how a student new to DA might approach this material, it would have been helpful to follow the introduction with a summary and comparison of the methods used in the volume. In the twenty-three chapters that follow, each of the NT books are analyzed using slightly different methods (the Pastoral Epistles and the letters of John are grouped together for single chapters). In the narrative texts of the Gospels and Acts, the analysts first use a top-down approach and then supplement their resultant macrostructures with details from bottom-up examinations. David J. Clark and Todd Scacewater's study

of Matthew's Gospel is occasionally frustrating on this front, identifying a feature of the discourse without providing the undergirding feature data; at Matthew 12:38–45, for example, "we reach the climax of the scene in the demand for a sign" but not offering a discourse reason for identifying this as the climax (p. 43). Robert Longacre's chapter on Mark and Todd Chipman's chapter on Luke are quite similar in approach and provide more satisfying sentence-level support for their macrostructures, looking at non-default patterns of verb forms and other such variations. Chipman's use of visual charts is helpful, though its grayscale figures are sometimes quite difficult to read (e.g., the faint axes in Figure 3.9, p. 109). Michael Rudolph's analysis of John's Gospel is surprisingly caustic in its criticism of previous studies, noting that his study "focuses upon the unique ways that the author shapes and develops his message utilizing certain principles of communication as the foundation for its analysis," using a lens that "differs remarkably in the details that are allowed to shape the conclusions" (pp. 129–30). In the end, he identifies variations of μετὰ ταῦτα as important boundary markers. Jenny Read-Heimerdinger's analysis of the Acts narrative varies from those of the others in that, rather than using the eclectic Nestle-Aland text, she uses the text of Acts from Codex Bezae. Her hesitance to use an eclectic text that may obscure the pattern of discourse markers found in a *single* manuscript is sound, though doing so on the lacunose manuscript of Bezae requires some reconstruction of its own. Read-Heimerdinger's chapter raises an important question by highlighting the hypothetical Greek text of the Nestle-Aland editions: Which Greek text is being analyzed in each chapter? Do the analysts make use of Nestle-Aland (and which edition?), the SBL Greek NT, a Byzantine edition, the Tyndale House Greek NT, another edition, a diplomatic text, or a text modified by their own text-critical decisions? While Greek texts are generally not radically different, an explicit statement in each study would have clarified which Greek text is under analysis.

The analyses of the non-narrative texts, while too numerous to discuss individually, follow generally similar approaches. In each chapter the analyst introduces the biblical book and provides a brief description of methodology; some analysts at this point are simply descriptive while others are applauded for being more pedagogically oriented. Nearly all the analysts begin with chunking their discourse into subunits to create a macrostructure (here there is frequent appeal to Longacre's prior work on identifying macrostructures) and then filling in the supporting details with diverse approaches to analyzing microstructures. At this point several of the studies helpfully acknowledge that identifying these subunits of text requires a dialectic process, with interplay between top-down and bottom-up analyses. Various means of identifying signals for prominence and intersentential relationships are used: relevance theory, Longacre's "zones of turbulence," and Stephen Levinsohn's discourse features, to name a few. Most of the contributors to these chapters have published more extensively on the books they analyze in this volume, and those works may serve as further reading for the more adventurous. Some will certainly be prompted to delve deeper with Longacre on macrostructuring or Sperber and Wilson on relevance theory. But genuine insight into the structures, peaks, and themes of the NT books is offered here with concrete demonstrations of DA and

some humility regarding the results. Scacewater's admission that his DA of Colossians failed to contribute "anything to the debate about the nature of the Colossian philosophy" (p. 414) is a welcome reminder that DA does not answer all the questions one might pose to the NT writings; it is merely an extension of the exegete's grammatical toolbox. These concepts are echoed elsewhere in this book, with Michael Aubrey (writing on 2 Thessalonians) admitting, "I consider sentence grammar and discourse grammar as the same grammar" (p. 443). DA is equipped to enhance traditional exegesis rather than replace it.

Returning to the purpose of this book: will this collection of studies succeed at motivating biblical students and scholars to pursue DA in their exegetical work? Skeptics who cut their teeth on traditional grammars may require more convincing. While each of these studies delivers some form of exegetical payoff, it is assumed rather than demonstrated that each of these approaches is accurately interpreting Koine Greek. Not all linguistic analyses reach the same destination. Thus, presenting approaches that differ without explaining how they are complementary and therefore generally similar will no doubt concern some readers. In my experience teaching Greek DA to seminary students for more than ten years, demonstrable exegetical results are a powerful incentive to learn more about DA if a principal can be *consistently* demonstrated to be true; a changing approach may impact a student's confidence in the methods. Regardless, this work represents a remarkable effort to assemble analyses of every NT book into a single volume and must be commended for making DA material more accessible to a broader audience. It is encouraging to encounter a broad range of contributors working toward the same goal, and Scacewater is to be lauded for editing these materials into a single, affordable guide for students and scholars alike. Regarding affordability, the hardback edition of this book should have a sturdier spine; it appears to be glued just as the paperback edition is (though the boards of course add some protection). Given this book's length and likelihood of serving as a reference work, those investing in the hardback edition should be aware that it is bound with neither cloth nor sewing.

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Always Reforming: Reflections on Martin Luther and Biblical Studies. Edited by Channing L. Crisler and Robert Plummer. Studies in Historical and Systematic Theology. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021, 181 pp., $29.99 paper.

The aim of *Always Reforming* is to provide an appropriate homage to Mark Seifrid by following his lead in exploring evangelical theology through the words and ideas of the great reformer Martin Luther. The danger in writing about Luther through the lens of modern evangelicalism is that Luther's own words and ideas may become obscured by attempts to make him palatable to (or even harmonious with) our own preferred beliefs. As with sunglasses, the actual color of Luther's world can be distorted to protect our theological sensibilities. Too often, the work of great theologians of the past is reduced to little more than phrases comman-

deered for our own purposes. Thankfully, the authors of *Always Reforming* endeavor to avoid this by allowing Luther to speak on the topics they write about. In so doing, they ably refract our modern perspectives through the lens of Luther's original insights, providing powerful and cogent articulations of essential theological beliefs. These articulations are sometimes used to reinforce our understanding and commitment, while elsewhere they provide gentle correction or redirection for where we may have drifted from theological safety.

In each of the ten chapters, the authors (from diverse backgrounds across the evangelical spectrum) grapple with key aspects of Luther's theology within its historical context and examine the impact of Luther's analysis on modern evangelicalism. In the first chapter, Gregg Allison considers the perspicuity of Scripture and demonstrates that Luther broke from scholastic traditions of his own era by prioritizing a literal reading of the text. Allison also teases out the helpful reflection that Luther held Scripture above the traditions of the church and even the church fathers, giving Scripture preeminence as divine revelation. Students of the Reformation will immediately understand the historical significance of these positions.

Robert Plummer answers the immediate question that may arise after reading Allison: What about allegory? It may not be a natural question for the modern reader, but it would certainly have been a key question to address once Luther set his course upon the primacy of the literal interpretation of Scripture. Plummer frames this chapter by suggesting that Luther's position may "assess th[e] recent trend" of promoting Origen and his allegorical method, namely "The Theological Interpretation of Scripture Movement" (pp. 14–15). His analysis shows that the multifaceted aspect of the allegorical method of interpretation is attractive because it broadens potential interpretations beyond a traditional comprehension. Plummer argues that Luther would be wary of employing an allegorical reading where the text was not clearly allegorical. The fact that Luther uses allegory does not undermine his position because, as Plummer rightly notes, Luther "understood the allegory that he practiced as distinct from the church fathers" (p. 24). He provides four ways in which Luther is governed by the text so that his use of allegory maintains the rigor of being grounded in an accurate exegesis of the text.

Having established Luther's hermeneutic, the subsequent chapters address various ideas inherent to Luther's overarching theological "system." Channing Crisler considers what he believes to have been Luther's understanding of the center of Paul's theology: *tentatio*. Crisler argues that Luther believes Paul's reliance on prayer (*oratio*), meditation on Scripture (*meditatio*), and affliction (*tentatio*) resulted in a recurring experience of certainty in the promise of the Gospel (pp. 34–35). Robert Kolb considers Luther's pedagogy in a practical manner, reflecting on detailed examples from Luther's exposition of the letter to Titus, noting that Luther's focus was on how his students would use their education at Wittenberg to cultivate a character prepared for the ministry of the Gospel. Timo Laato discusses the nature of Luther's thought concerning the regeneration of baptism. Unsurprisingly, this is the largest chapter and, in dialogue with the Lutheran Bishop Väisänen, Laato denounces Väisänen as rejecting Luther's priority of the Word and the Sacraments. Andrew Das uses Luther to combat the New Perspective on Paul by testing Paul's

usage of the OT alongside Luther's awareness of Paul's intentional (or otherwise) OT quotations. He concludes that, unlike the New Perspective, Luther's appreciation of Paul's usage was markedly less fulsome in quantity, not because Luther knew the OT less than modern exegetes, but that Luther, correctly, recognized when Paul was signaling his OT reflections, and therefore refuses to draw comparisons or allusions when Paul has not made clear that he was actually doing so.

Tom Schreiner convincingly shows that Luther's belief that Christians are *simul iustus et peccator* is a profound Biblical truth. Benjamin Merkle highlights the well-known fact that Luther's love for and reliance upon the book of Romans shaped his teaching and writings, and could be considered the central influence on his ministry. Brian Vickers assesses the doctrine of imputation as explained by Luther, which helped propel the Reformation forward by correctly understanding the alien righteousness given to believers by Christ as distinct from (and before) our own works of righteousness, which are performed as a consequence of our freedom in Christ. Finally, Oswald Bayer's transcribed sermon reminds the believer that, as with Luther, we live in the fallenness of this world but yearn for the dawning of Christ's justice and restoration of all things.

Always Reforming contains helpful reflections and correctives to evangelicalism, but it could have benefited from a chapter sketching the contours of Luther's life. While it is aimed at an audience who presumably have both a historical and a theological awareness of Luther's life and thought, these essays presuppose a level of knowledge that may not be typical outside the academy. For a series in "historical theology," a chapter on the theological and historical (and historical-theological) context of Luther's world would have deeply enriched this otherwise helpful and illuminating volume. Such a chapter could helpfully deal with other commonly known "challenges" with Luther's works, such as his alleged anti-Semitism, his use of polemic and polemical language, his Christology of the Eucharist, and his ideas concerning the law vs. the gospel. Such a chapter would also explain that Luther's theology was often worked out by meditating upon the arguments of his opponents, with the result that it is sometimes less systematic than we would like. Especially in the case of Luther, an explication of his context would enhance our appreciation for him as a theologian and also remind us that he, like us and like the church fathers, was a fellow brother searching for a deeper knowledge of God.

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The Messianic Theology of the New Testament. By Joshua W. Jipp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020, 484 pp., $50.00.

When I was a seminary student in the 1980s, I read the first edition of George Eldon Ladd's *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974). I learned for the first time that different idioms favored by different NT authors could all be viewed as referring to the same basic thing—realized eschatology, or the inauguration into "this age" of the "age to come." The Synoptic Gospels'

phrase "kingdom of God" was the conceptual equivalent of "eternal life" in John's Gospel, which corresponded to "justification" in Paul's thought. All three corpora, Ladd taught, referred to the "already" and "not yet." This created in my mind a "center" to the variegated theologies of the NT, which has never left me since. In recent days, a number of scholars have attempted something similar to Ladd's volume (Thomas Schreiner's *New Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008]; Gregory Beale's *A New Testament Biblical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011]; I. Howard Marshall's *New Testament Theology* [Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014]; etc.), I consider Joshua W. Jipp's 2020 volume *The Messianic Theology of the New Testament* in the same basic category as these works because it suggests that "Jesus' messianic identity" is "one of the unifying, central threads" of the NT (p. 14).

To show that the "messianic identity of Jesus of Nazareth" is the primary content of New Testament theology" (p. 3), Jipp endeavors to show exegetically that the diversity of themes found in the NT are "creative expansions" upon the earliest Christian confessions "Jesus is the Messiah" and "Jesus is the Lord" (p. 4). The heart of Jipp's book, after an introductory section (pp. 1–17), is the delineation of these "creative expansions" in "Part One: The Messianic Testimony of the New Testament" (pp. 19–309). In each of the nine chapters devoted to a NT book or corpus (27 books covered in only nine chapters to avoid unnecessary repetition), Jipp begins with the passages containing "messianic discourse," which Jipp defines as "(1) royal titles, such as Christ, Son of David, Branch, Lion of Judah, Shepherd, King and so on, (2) well-known Scriptural texts that involve a messianic king or good/ideal ruler, and (3) a royal motif such as a king engaging in military battles, or ruling his people with justice and righteousness" (pp. 16–17). Jipp then exegetically connects this messianic discourse to what is generally recognized as the main themes of that NT book or corpus.

One would think this process would be rather straightforward in the gospels, but as Jipp proceeds, it becomes less obvious than one might expect. For example, every NT student has wondered at one time or another, if the promised Davidic King (cf. the "Son of David" in 2 Samuel 7) in the Hebrew Bible is predicted to suffer and die for sins (cf. the "Suffering Servant" in Isaiah 53). Here Jipp shows how, for Matthew, the latter is a "creative expansion" upon the former. In his chapter on Matthew (chap. 1, pp. 21–56), Jipp begins, as in all the Part 1 chapters, by listing the messianic discourse passages ("Son of David" in Matt 1:1; 9:27; 12:33; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9, 15; 22:42; p. 21). He then proceeds to show that Matthew's genealogy (1:1–16) is shaped to emphasize that the coming Davidic King will bring an end to Israel's exile in Babylon (1:12, 17), assumed to be the result of Israel's sin. Logically, when this coming Davidic King restores Israel's kingdom (cf. 1:23; 2:2), he will do it by saving his people from their sins (1:21; p. 25). Later in this chapter, Jipp goes on to show from Israel's Scriptures that paying ransom for Israel's sins (20:28; 26:28; 7:46) is a kingly, Davidic function (pp. 31–35). In summary, Jipp shows exegetically that "saving Israel from her sins" is Matthew's "creative expansion" on the role of the Messiah. In this chapter, Jipp does the same with other well-known Matthean themes regarding Jesus. When Matthew portrays "Jesus as a teacher" (5:18–19), Jipp reminds us that in Israel's Scriptures the Messiah loves,

interprets, and obeys God's Torah (Deut 17:14–20; Pss 1–2; 40:8; pp. 35–42). When Matthew emphasizes "Jesus' deeds of mercy and compassion" (5:43–48; 11:25–12:14, 18–21; 23:23), Jipp reminds us that in Israel's Scriptures the Messiah is a humble Shepherd-King (Ezek 34: 23; Mic 5:4; Jer 23:1–6; Zech 9:16; pp. 45–52). In short, Jipp's NT theology provides the "connective tissue" joining messianic discourse and the basic themes of Matthean theology.

This connective tissue between messianic discourse and NT book themes in the other chapters of Part 1 is at times rather ingenious. For example, for his discussion of the book of Romans (chap. 6), Jipp begins with Jesus's physical descent from David mentioned in 1:3–4 and then brilliantly and quickly moves to say that the "Davidic king served as an embodied representative of his people" and indicates "that God's Son enters into the very anthropological fleshly existence of Israel, taking on all the physical weakness and decay that goes along with corporeal existence (cf. Rom 7:17–25)" (p. 187). This observation about how the Messiah identifies with his people paves the way for Jipp's discussion of Paul's well-known "participatory soteriology" in Romans 5–8. Adam and Christ (5:12–21), Jipp says, are portrayed as "kings who represent dominions which exert lordship over humanity" (p. 178). Humanity in Adam enables sin and death to dominate the body, so that Jesus, to rescue humanity, must take on a bodily existence and all that comes with it—subjection to death (6:9), sin (6:10), law (7:4), and suffering (8:17). When Jesus is resurrected as God's Son (1:4), he likewise extends divine realities to humanity as their representative—righteousness (6:18), sonship (8:14), life (8:2), the Spirit (8:16), and glory (8:18; pp. 205–8). As Jipp summarizes it, "Romans 5–8 is essentially a cosmic development and application of the soteriological significance of Christ's messianic identity as set forth in 1:3–4" (p. 204).

While Jipp considers Part 1 of his volume "The Messianic *Testimony* of the New Testament," he calls Part 2 of his work "The Messianic *Theology* of The New Testament" (pp. 313–406). Traditionally, the discipline of NT theology is descriptive and historical. But writers of NT theologies in recent days have attempted to go beyond this to include synthesizing sections that are more prescriptive and contemporizing. Jipp does the same. In Part 2, Jipp summarizes how the messiahship of Jesus influences the NT's concept of traditional categories of church dogmatics: its concept of Scripture (chap. 10), Christology (chap. 11), soteriology (chap. 12), sanctification and ecclesiology (chap. 13), and politics, power, and eschatology (chap. 14). For those familiar with the "perspectivalism" approach in Vern Poythress and John Frame, Part 2 is a wonderful example of how one can view the whole of systematic theology through the lens of one possible "theological center," the messiahship of Jesus. Thus, the "Spirit-Anointing of the Messiah" at his baptism becomes a key theological lens through which to see the humanity of Jesus (Christology, pp. 329–31), the inheritance of the people of God (soteriology, pp. 246–50), and the church's mission in the world (ecclesiology, pp. 385–87). Likewise, the "Enthronement of the Messiah" becomes a key theological lens through which to see Jesus's divine identity (Christology, pp. 336–38), the believer's participation in the rule of the Messiah (soteriology, pp. 358–61), and the church's life under the reign of the Messiah (ecclesiology, pp. 372–78).

By way of critique, two methodological "red flags" occurred to me as I was reading. First, Jipp often assumes the concept of messiahship is a clear and distinct idea to the NT authors and to his readers. In his introduction, Jipp assumes the word "messiahship" refers to "an anointed royal king and one most frequently associated with the house and lineage of David" (p. 15). But it is common knowledge that there were at least four different concepts of an "anointed one" operating at Qumran: a prophetic messiah, a priestly messiah, a kingly messiah, and a heavenly or apocalyptic messiah. Although this fact does not automatically disqualify Jipp's attempt as a legitimate enterprise in NT theology, it at least raises skepticism in the mind of his readers, including mine. Second, one is reminded of James Barr's warning about illegitimate totality transfer, when an interpreter reads an entire concept into a word—in Jipp's case, into a messianic title or motif. This is a misstep to which Jipp is occasionally prone. For example, in his chapter on Revelation (chap. 9), Jipp claims that in the title "Jesus Christ, ruler of the kings of the earth" (1:5), the author John has in mind the messianic promises to David in Psalm 89:20–27 (p. 287). Could Jipp be overreaching here? A thin line separates the perception of an exegetical "creative expansion" and illegitimate totality transfer.

But the positives outweigh the negatives with Jipp's volume. I teach a course at Alliance Theological Seminary in NT theology, in which I have students read the revised edition of George Eldon Ladd's *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), to learn the discipline. I would not recommend assigning Jipp as a student's *first* textbook to read in the discipline of NT theology; I will stay with Ladd, which is far more readable. Jipp would work better as a *second* supplemental textbook, to demonstrate to students a second approach to the discipline, as a parallel to Ladd. But this is not the only value to *The Messianic Theology of the New Testament*. Jipp's volume will help students appreciate how central Judaism and Jewish ideas were to the origins of the Christian faith.

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Christological Rereading of the Shema (Deut 6.4) in Mark's Gospel. By John J. R. Lee. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/533. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020, 320 pp., €84.00.

This book is a revised version of the author's dissertation at the University of Edinburgh in 2011. Lee makes an important contribution to the study of Mark's Gospel, especially in his argument that "in Mark's Gospel, the Shema language of Deut 6.4 … links Jesus directly and inseparably with Israel's unique God" (p. 10, italics removed). In this way Lee offers a corrective to the not uncommon argument that Mark's Christology is "lower" than the other canonical Gospels and presents a case that Mark does ascribe divinity to Jesus. The book does not solely focus on the Shema but engages the topic of Markan Christology from a broader perspective.

The book is organized into five chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction and includes discussion of the history of research and the plan for the study. Chapter 1 also describes the life setting for the composition of Mark, where Lee takes the more traditional view that Mark was composed for a Roman audience facing persecution, rather than an audience in a location such as Syria or Galilee.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of Jewish monotheism in the Second Temple period. The primary goal of this chapter is to demonstrate that Jews believed there was only a single unique divine being to whom worship was due. In this chapter Lee dialogues with proposals from Peter Hayman and Paula Fredriksen that Judaism practiced henotheism, rather than monotheism, in the Second Temple period. On this point, Lee's argument appears to be concerned with preserving the uniqueness of Jesus's claims concerning his identity and preventing the impression that high Christology is the end-result of a historical-theological evolution of the biblical tradition. This is a valid concern, but Lee may be missing an opportunity to explore further what distinguishes Mark's depiction of Jesus from something such as Arianism, or why Jesus's self-identification with the figure in Psalm 110:1 in Mark 12:35–37 did not result in his immediate death at the hands of the crowd he was addressing. Lee concludes that Mark does not promote ditheism in its appropriation of the Shema, viewing only God himself as the one deserving of worship.

Chapter 3 presents a very strong case for interpreting Mark 12:28–34 and 12:35–37 together as two mutually informing units. Lee underlines the thematic and verbal links between the two units, that Deuteronomy 6:4 had a high profile in early Judaism, and that Psalm 110:1 was granted a similar profile in early Christianity. Since these quotations are both placed on the lips of Jesus in Mark, these two passages are therefore important for understanding the Gospel's presentation of Jesus's self-understanding. In the first unit Jesus and the scribe both emphasize God's unique status, while the second unit nuances the first when Jesus uses Psalm 110:1 to allude to his own divinity and participation with God in his rule over creation.

In chapter 4, Lee examines the allusions to the Shema found in Mark 2:7 and 10:18. The suggestion by the scribes in 2:7 that human agents cannot grant forgiveness for sin creates an opportunity for Jesus to demonstrate that he does indeed have such authority by healing the paralytic (pp. 162–74). Lee argues that while Jesus appears to reject the epithet "good teacher" in 10:18, the context of the passage prompts the audience to infer that Jesus is indeed "good" like God. This should again be understood as making a subtle claim to divinity (p. 192) that links "Jesus with God inseparably and presenting the two as resonating with, and fundamentally corresponding to, each other" (p. 195).

The fifth chapter is primarily an intertextual study of various references to the OT in Mark where Lee seeks to demonstrate that while Jesus is a distinct individual, the Gospel still depicts him as linked "directly and inseparably" to God (p. 198). Examples of this include Jesus's appropriation of the title *kyrios*, the phrase *ego eimi*, as well as demonstrations of creative power seen in his exorcisms, healings, control over water, and his reconstitution of Israel in the twelve disciples. Lee dialogues with J. R. Daniel Kirk's claim in *A Man Attested by God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

2016) that Jesus is an idealized human figure selected to represent God to creation. He accepts Kirk's claim that the Synoptic Jesus is indeed such an idealized human figure but claims this paradigm is insufficient for fully explaining Markan and Synoptic Christology (pp. 212–20). He then returns to discussion of Jesus's divinity (pp. 221–27) and explores the nuances to be discerned in the use of the title "Son of God." Lee maintains that the Markan portrayal builds upon previous uses of "Son of God" in Jewish and Israelite history, but these precedents cannot account for the title's use in the context of the Gospel's Christology (pp. 227–43). He brings the matter to a close by arguing that, as it does on many other points, the Mark uses paradox in communicating its views concerning Jesus as a human being and divine agent (pp. 244–47). The book includes helpful end matter such as a bibliography and ancient literature, modern author, and subject indexes.

While Lee identifies his methodologies as narrative criticism and composition criticism (pp. 9–10), the study reveals itself to be using a synthetic approach that dialogues with historical-critical research, intertextuality, and biblical theology. There are some discussions of narrative-critical issues and Lee relies upon the collocation of literary units at certain points, but he does not provide the overall framework for how he engages narratological matters in his research. At times more attention to narrative-critical techniques or devices such as intercalation may have helped provide greater clarity on what Mark is trying to communicate about Jesus's identity. For example, Lee presents a strong case that Mark 12:28–34 and 12:35–37 should be used to interpret one another, but more explicit attention to narratological strategies and composition techniques could possibly have strengthened his case or provided deeper insight into what these passages are trying to communicate about Jesus (pp. 112–30).

A point where Lee clearly succeeds is in his nuanced discussions of Christology in chapter 5. Lee is very careful to avoid falling into the traps of equivocating Jesus's identity with that of his Father or of relying on categories that would place Jesus as having a solely human identity under an adoptionist Christology. He also notes the many cases where Jesus paradoxically displays divine power while taking a posture of cruciformity as an example for his disciples. Lee's embrace of paradox allows him to identify indicators of a Trinitarian understanding of Jesus in Mark that account for features of both "high" and "low" views of Christology. For theological conservatives, this book will be a welcome contribution to the growing scholarly conversation concerning Mark's depiction of Jesus, though those of a more historical-critical orientation may find themselves wishing for more willingness to use certain elements of the "henotheist" or "idealized human figure" concepts as heuristic tools for further engaging Trinitarian perspectives. This book will be of interest to those researching the development of beliefs about Jesus in the NT, particularly in Mark and the other Gospels.

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John among the Apocalypses: Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the "Apocalyptic" Gospel. By Benjamin E. Reynolds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020, xvii + 254 pp., $85.00.

Interpreters have long recognized the distinctiveness of John among the canonical Gospels, variously describing John as a soaring eagle (Irenaeus), a "spiritual Gospel" (Clement of Alexandria), a "dramatic narrative" (Michael Theobald), a "cosmological tale" (Adele Reinhartz), or "the prophetic Gospel" (A. T. Hanson). Professor Benjamin Reynolds of Tyndale University calls John "the 'apocalyptic' Gospel" (p. 141). The seeds for *John among the Apocalypses* were sown in a 2010 colloquium paper at the University of Wales (published in *John's Gospel and Intimations of Apocalyptic*, ed. Catrin Williams and Christopher Rowland [London: Bloomsbury, 2014]). This well-researched, innovative monograph argues that the central theme of revelation sets John apart from the Synoptics and likens the Fourth Gospel to early Jewish and Christian apocalypses. For Reynolds, John is "a gospel in genre but apocalyptic in mode" (p. 20).

The introduction establishes the centrality of revelation in John's Gospel, building on the work of Rudolph Bultmann, John Ashton, and others. While the key term ἀποκαλύπτω occurs only in John 12:38 (citing Isaiah 53:1), the Fourth Gospel casts Jesus as a heavenly figure who makes the Father known as "the vision of God on earth" (p. 10).

Chapter 1 introduces modern genre studies, explaining that form, function, and content each play a role when determining "genre prototypes" (p. 18). A work's genre provides a framework or initial orientation for the reader; genres also influence each other and may be extended or qualified through "modes" (p. 19). Reynolds then interacts with scholarly treatments of the "apocalypse" genre, with particular focus on the standard definition originally published in *Semeia* 14 (1979):

> A genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world (p. 21).

Subsequent scholarship has supplemented this definition to explain the function of an apocalypse as being to interpret present, earthly circumstances and to influence readers' understanding and behavior (p. 23). Reynolds acknowledges that some scholars have noticed similarities between John and Jewish apocalyptic writings, but he goes further in arguing that John is a gospel that has been shaped by "the form, content, and function of an apocalypse" (p. 36).

Chapters 2–4 present a detailed, full-scale comparison of John with the apocalypse genre following the *Semeia* definition explained in chapter 1. Reynolds argues that John "is revelatory literature with a narrative framework" (p. 40) and focuses particularly on Christ's reference to "heaven opened" (1:51) and his portrayal "as an otherworldly mediator" (p. 66). He claims that John "reveals core content elements of the genre of apocalypse," such as protology, eschatological crisis, eschatological judgment and salvation, and otherworldly elements (p. 91). Jesus's

self-designation as "Son of Man" offers a key parallel with Daniel 7:13, as well as 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch (p. 83). He also suggests that John's Gospel, like apocalypses, offers an eschatological perspective on current, earthly circumstances and also aims to influence people's understanding and behavior, as in the book's purpose statement in 20:30–31.

Reynolds acknowledges in chapter 5 that while John snugly fits the conventional definition of apocalypse, "no one would confuse John with an apocalypse" (p. 120). Unlike the heavenly mediators in apocalypses, Jesus is a human being who suffers and dies and is "one" with the Father; he is not only the revealer but the content of the revelation. Reynolds then defends his thesis that John is the "'apocalyptic' Gospel, because it is a revelatory telling of Jesus's life" (p. 142).

Chapter 6 explores how this understanding of John as "apocalyptic" aids the Gospel's interpretation. Reynolds notes common imagery between John and apocalypses (e.g., lamb, glory) and focuses particularly on how John's Gospel (like the apocalypses) appeals to the authority of the Torah and presents further heavenly revelation, though Jesus fulfills prior revelation.

The final chapter addresses "the elephant in the room"—the relationship between John and the book of Revelation (p. 168). Reynolds acknowledges the traditional consensus that the apostle John wrote the Gospel and Revelation and the modern consensus that these books come from different non-apostolic hands. While Reynolds stops short of arguing for common apostolic authorship, he compares and contrasts the vocabulary, syntax, and theological themes of John and Revelation, concluding that the texts "are alike and yet not alike" (p. 179). He suggests (following Hippolytus and others) that Revelation may have been written prior to John's Gospel and known by its author. Reynolds then offers a fascinating proposal that early interpreters and iconography portray John's Gospel as heavenly revelation. This wide-ranging exploration of John's reception history focuses particularly on the Muratorian Fragment and the fifth-century *Acts of John by Prochorus* and includes four color images of the Evangelist and his secretary, Prochorus, including one icon from the monastery at Patmos. Thus, Revelation's "chronological priority" and John's reception history "offer reasonable explanations for the Gospel's framing of Jesus's earthly life and work as a revelatory narrative" (p. 209). Reynolds's appeals to the reception history of John's Gospel are selective, as he follows the tradition that portrays the Fourth Gospel as *apocalyptic* yet does not unequivocally embrace the tradition's consensus that this Gospel is *apostolic*.

Reynolds returns several times to a comment by Adela Yarbro Collins: "Gospel of John is not an apocalypse because it is not that sort of narrative" ("Epilogue," in *John's Gospel and Intimations of Apocalyptic*, 314). This judgment looms as Reynolds carefully sets forth John's correspondences with Jewish apocalypses in chapters 2–4. He grants in chapter 5 that John is not an apocalypse yet maintains that John is more of "that sort of narrative" than Yarbro Collins allows (p. 129).

John among the Apocalypses is a masterful example of clear writing, careful organization, sustained argumentation, and wide-ranging research in service of a clear and controversial thesis, delivered in a meticulously edited and beautifully produced Oxford University Press hardback. Reynolds presents numerous intriguing parallels

between John and Jewish apocalypses (e.g., 1 Enoch, 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, Dan 7–12). He also successfully highlights John's distinctive emphasis on Jesus as the revealer and the revealed one, though he curiously does not explore this similarity with "the Revelation of Jesus Christ."

Calling John "the *apocalyptic* Gospel" helpfully stresses the Johannine emphasis on divine disclosure by and about the God-Man, yet Reynolds moves too quickly over the revelatory motifs in the Synoptics, including Christ's baptism and transfiguration scenes, the Olivet Discourse, and the use of ἀποκαλύπτω (4x in Matthew, 5x in Luke). Additionally, while Reynolds frequently references John 1:51, I would have welcomed more reflection on what precisely Jesus means that Nathanael "will see heaven opened." John's references to Jesus's "hour" seem to be an underexplored parallel with the book of Daniel (see Stefanos Mihalios, *The Danielic Eschatological Hour in the Johannine Literature* [London: T&T Clark, 2011]).

This book has challenged me to reflect more deeply on the genre of John, yet I conclude even after Reynolds's masterful discussion of Jewish apocalypses that John "is not that sort of narrative." Nevertheless, *John among the Apocalypses* is an important contribution that scholars and students of John's Gospel must take seriously.

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The Paradox of Sonship: Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews. By R. B. Jamieson. Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021, xviii + 195 pp., $24.95 paper.

The opening of Hebrews appears to affirm both the preexistence and adoption of the Son. He is the Son through whom God "made the worlds" and to whom God said, "Today have I begotten you." R. B. Jamieson uses the tools of classical Christological interpretation to shed light on this question. He argues that Hebrews uses "Son" in two compatible ways. First, the term refers to the Son's *identity*, his "distinct mode of divine existence" (p. 1). Second, it refers to the *role* he assumes at his enthronement, his "office of messianic rule" (p. 2). The two are related: "Jesus can become the messianic son only because he is the divine son incarnate" (p. 2). Jamieson makes a good case for "Son" as a description of the Son's "distinct mode of divine existence" and for the importance of both the Son's deity and incarnation. The crucial question is whether Hebrews uses "Son" to distinguish the "messianic office" from the deity of the Son.

Jamieson begins with a helpful summary of Hebrews' Christology and a survey of the answers that have been given to this preexistence/adoption question: (1) Jesus became the Son at his session/enthronement. Earlier references to sonship are proleptic. (2) Jesus has always been the eternal Son. At his session God revealed his sonship to the world. (3) Hebrews uses two unreconciled traditions—one affirming sonship from eternity, one, at enthronement. A few scholars have suggest-

ed that Hebrews uses this term in two distinct but consistent ways for both the eternal and the messianic Son.

Many of us may be unfamiliar with the six classical Christological "reading strategies" in chapter 1. We summarize the first three by saying that we join the church fathers when we read (1) acknowledging Jesus's identity as a single divine person, (2) recognizing his possession of both human and divine natures, and (3) being sensitive to the stages in his career—preexistence, incarnation, exaltation. The second three, which depend upon the first, Jamieson calls (1) "partitive exegesis," (2) "twofold predication," and (3) "paradoxical predication." According to "partitive exegesis," some passages refer to Jesus's divinity, others to his humanity. According to "twofold predication," some things Jesus does in his humanity, others, in his deity. However, according to "paradoxical predication," Scripture sometimes joins descriptions of his deity with actions done in his humanity, or vice versa. For instance, Paul says that "they crucified [possible through his humanity] the Lord of Glory [a description of deity]." In his application of these strategies Jamieson affirms that the Son's deity and humanity are both necessary for his mission.

Chapter 2 addresses the Son's deity. Not only is "Son" an affirmation of deity, but the way Hebrews refers to Father, Son, and Spirit accords well with the doctrine of the Trinity. Chapter 3 addresses the Son's incarnate mission. The incarnation, with its obedience and suffering, was the course by which the eternal Son was perfected as High Priest and assumed the "messianic office" of Son. Chapter 4 argues that, according to Hebrews 1:5, the eternal Son assumed the "messianic office" of Son at his enthronement. Finally, chapter 5 contends that only the eternal Son could become the "messianic" Son through the incarnation.

There is much to be admired in Jamieson's study, such as (1) his robust defense of both the Son's deity and incarnation as essential for the Son's mission, (2) his insistence that any adequate understanding of the Christology of Hebrews must account for the preexistence-incarnation-exaltation-second coming narrative, (3) his willingness to draw on the classical Christological tradition, and (4) his demonstration that the Christology of Hebrews is in accord with Chalcedon. (For the role of the Son's deity in the theology of Hebrews see Nick Brennan's excellent dissertation, *Divine Christology in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Son as God*, LNTS 248 [London: Bloomsbury, 2021]). Yet I remain unconvinced that the writer of Hebrews is consciously using "Son" in *two* distinct ways.

First, the assertion that Hebrews uses "Son" in a distinctly second way for the "messianic office" fails to grasp Hebrews' use of OT Davidic material. It is true that the Father addresses the Son on the occasion of his exaltation with passages once addressed to the descendant of David (2 Sam 7:14; Pss 2:7; 45:6–7; 110:1). This very fact, however, raises these passages to a new level. Hints of Jesus's connection with David are muted. Hebrews never refers to Jesus as a descendent of David, as a king, or specifically as Davidic Messiah—despite the fact that the author is aware of Jesus's descent from the tribe of Judah. Instead, "Son," has assumed a prominence far in excess of its rare messianic usage in the OT or in Second Temple Judaism. In the OT, the establishing of messianic rule was the establishing of *God's* rule. And that is exactly what we have in Hebrews: through his

obedient incarnate life the *divine* Son as *divine* Son establishes the rule of God palely prefigured by David: "Your throne, *O God*, is forever and ever" (Heb 1:8, Ps 45:6). Without losing its messianic significance, the term "Son" has been taken up into something much larger. Jamieson's admission that Jesus was the "messianic" Son (pp. 119–20) as well as the eternal Son *before* his enthronement shows that the two can hardly be separated. Furthermore, his acknowledgment that the proposed second sense occurs *only* in Hebrews 1:5 (pp. 119–20) exposes the weakness of the argument.

Second, there is a simpler—yet more profound—answer. Preexistence versus adoption is not the only issue raised by the opening of Hebrews. Scholars have also asked why the writer puts "whom he made heir of all things" before "by whom he created the worlds." Why eschatology before creation? This second conundrum helps explain the first: God "has spoken to us in a *Son* whom he made *heir* of all things" (italics added). It is sons who are heirs. Inheritance is the *fulfillment* of sonship. Jamieson agrees that God made the Son "heir of all things" at his session/enthronement. Thus, the eternal Son entered his inheritance *as* Son through the incarnate obedience by which he "inherited" the name "Son" at his enthronement. When he entered his inheritance, he entered into the full exercise of what *he had always been.* This understanding of sonship/inheritance is in full accord with Jamieson's insistence on the importance of both the deity and incarnation of the Son. It fits seamlessly into the preexistence-incarnation-session-second coming narrative.

Jamieson contends that "the office of Messiah, with its title 'Son,' is something added, like Jesus' human nature itself, to the Son who is already always divine" (p. 144). I would counter that the incarnation and exaltation were not extrinsic to the Son's person but the full expression of what he as divine Son had always been. Therefore, the final word that God has spoken through the *actions* (incarnation/exaltation) of the Son is, indeed the "radiance of God's glory" shining through the eternal *person* of the Son. Thus, while appreciative of much that Jamieson says, I must demure in his contention that Hebrews uses "Son" in a second distinct sense for the "messianic office."

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1 Peter: A Commentary. By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, xliv + 608 pp., $59.99.

In his preface, Craig Keener says the task of authors of commentaries is to be forthright about the limitations of their commentaries. He then proceeds to introduce his commentary on 1 Peter as "nowhere as comprehensive as [his] four-volume commentary on Acts," primarily because he engages much less with secondary scholarship in this work than he did in the Acts volumes. He explains that normally it takes him a year of forty-hour weeks of study to catch up on the secondary literature on a book when writing a commentary on it, and in this case his

schedule did not allow that. He apologizes because this commentary is deficient in this area, and he refers readers to other commentaries on 1 Peter for such engagement with the text, because this commentary is intended to "complement and supplement" (p. xii) other commentaries by providing background material on 1 Peter.

The occasion for this commentary was an invitation to Keener from Archbishop Justin Welby to be a part of the work on 1 Peter at the St. Augustine Seminar at Lambeth Palace, November 23–25, 2018. That seminar was an international and ecumenical meeting of theologians and biblical scholars to prepare materials for the proposed 2020 Lambeth Conference. Keener prepared for the seminar by collecting his background material on 1 Peter and making what he considered the most important parts of it available for other members of this seminar, and that material became the foundation of this commentary.

The background material on 1 Peter in this commentary is found in two forms. First, there are twenty-five excurses throughout the commentary that give the reader "A Closer Look" at the background of 1 Peter (pp. ix–x). These excurses are shaded in the text to set them apart, and they cover a variety of topics related to 1 Peter. The topics covered in them are: Some Ancient Jewish Views of Suffering; Providence, Fate, and Predestination in Antiquity; Rebirth, Conversion, Inheritance; The Supreme Deity as Father in Ancient Thought; Physical Passions (2:11); Roman Aristocratic Fears of Anti-traditional Groups; Household Codes; Ancient Images of Freedom and Slavery; Slavery in the Early Empire; Shepherds as Benevolent Rulers; Overseers; Marriage Expectations in Greco-Roman Antiquity; Women's "Weakness" in Ancient Sources; Ancient Baptism; Christ's Ascension in Its Ancient Context; Gentile Sexual Practices; Drunkenness; Idolatry; Hospitality; Prophetic Speech; Elders; Avoiding Greed in Antiquity; Satan/the Devil in Early Jewish Understanding; Silvanus's Role in Peter's Letter; and The Kiss of Love. It is not unusual for these excurses to be ten pages in length, and one can see from the titles that they have great potential to aid in the interpretation of 1 Peter and to illustrate and explain sermons on this letter. The excurses are thoroughly documented from ancient sources, and they provide a wealth of information on the text of 1 Peter. The other form of background material in the commentary, as anyone familiar with Keener's work would anticipate, is his constant reference to ancient sources in his footnotes throughout the commentary, documenting and supporting the material in the commentary. The index to Scripture references at the end of the commentary is over twenty-five pages, and even more impressive is the index of references to "Other Ancient Sources" that is over sixty pages. The commentary is literally laced together with footnote references to ancient sources.

The commentary begins with a unique translation of 1 Peter. Keener's strategy in the translation is "to experiment with ways to articulate the text that often differ from standard translations, simply to provide a complementary perspective on texts that may seem too familiar to some readers" (p. xxxvii). Some renderings are simpler, and some are less readable, designed to bring out often-overlooked nuances. The translation is a wonderful resource for preachers and scholars to use to compare, check, and challenge their translation of the text of 1 Peter.

The introductory material deals with the normal issues. Keener finds it difficult to outline 1 Peter because of the recurrence of themes and interrelationship of exhortations, and he offers different outlines. He also hints that 1:13–16 could possibly be the thesis statement for the letter. He surveys the most important internal arguments opposing Petrine authorship, and he finds the "more concrete external evidence" for Petrine authorship is sufficiently strong to make a compelling argument (p. 9). Here the early evidence from Polycarp is especially important, and that is supported by echoes and allusions to 1 Peter in other early Christian writings. Consistent with his belief in Petrine authorship of the letter, Keener dates the writing of 1 Peter during the reign of Nero, and he accepts a Roman provenance. The persecution envisioned in the letter is not empirewide, but it probably involved civic prosecutions dependent on charges brought by individual accusers, which could have serious consequences for Christians. The evidence suggests the audience of 1 Peter consisted of "many converts from a pagan background (1:18; 4:3), who came to monotheism through preaching about Jesus (1:21)" (p. 31). The introductory material also contains two short supplementary sections on Nero and Burning Rome. Since there is little, if any, debate that 1 Peter "comes from Greco-Roman antiquity, reflects knowledge of the OT in Greek …, and that it stems from early Christianity," readers who disagree with Keener's conclusion on dating or other particulars in his introduction should still profit from the commentary, which draws from a "wide range of ancient sources" (p. 32).

I will attempt to give a brief glimpse into the commentary by surveying five examples of how Keener handles grammatical and lexical issues. First, the present tense verb ἀγαλλιᾶσθε in 1:6 and 8, which could be indicative or imperative, could also be understood to refer to the present time or the future. Keener renders it as present time in both occurrences in his translation, and he mentions in a footnote that some "construe even the present verbs for rejoicing as future" and gives some sources to consult on the question. But he does not go into detail on the issue, other than referencing four other verses in 1 Peter, which he apparently feels refer to present suffering. A second example is Keener's discussion of the meaning of the adjective λογικός in 2:2 modifying the "milk" that the recipients are to "crave." In his translation he renders the word "mind-engaging," and helpfully discusses its possible meanings; his footnotes also give a good introduction to the discussion concerning this word's meaning, and he supports his choice of rendering from the context and helpful background information. A third example is the dative participle ἀπειθήσασίν in 3:20, which is interpreted in different ways, including as attributive, circumstantial (means), or circumstantial (time). His translation, "These were the spirits that disobeyed," suggests he takes it as attributive, but there is no discussion of the options or grammatical issues involved. A similar example is the participle βλασφημοῦντες at the end of 4:4. He renders it paraphrastically, "That's why they say terrible things about you," apparently showing result, but there is no discussion of the sense of the participle in the commentary. Finally, in addressing the admonition in 5:5 that the younger are to submit to "those who are older" (πρεσβυτέροις), Keener is clear that the idea of "older" is "comparative," and the Greek word refers to "those who are older," not "elders in their role as leaders" (p.

373). Here his background information is very helpful, but there could be more support for his decision. Hopefully these examples illustrate the degree to which this commentary engages grammatical, lexical, and other exegetical questions.

This is a special commentary. It is not the first place to go for grammatical, lexical, or even biblical-theological questions and issues related to 1 Peter, although these kinds of issues are discussed and addressed, sometimes very helpfully. The focus of this commentary is background information on 1 Peter, and for that I heartily endorse it. Anyone seriously studying 1 Peter needs to consult this commentary for its excurses on background material, its extended references to related sources in the footnotes, and its application of background information to the text of 1 Peter.

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Reading Revelation after Supersessionism: An Apocalyptic Journey of Socially Identifying John's Multi-Ethnic Ekklesiai with the Ekklesia of Israel. By Ralph J. Korner. Eugene, OR.: Cascade, 2020, xix + 312 pp., $39.00 paper.

Ralph Korner's *Reading Revelation after Supersessionism* is a part of the "New Testament after Supersessionism" series that offers post-supersessionist readings of each book of the NT. Korner's work focuses primarily on John's use of *ekklēsia* in the book of Revelation and its implications for assessing "the degree to which John inculcates a supersessionist perspective for his *ekklēsia* addressees" (p. 2).

Korner states his conclusion near the beginning of his work: the "'church' does not *dis*place or *re*place historic Israel, but rather is *em*placed *within* Israel" (p. 5; emphasis his). He refines this conclusion when he states that the Gentiles were incorporated "into the *qahal* (supra-local *ekklēsia*) of Israel, even though they are not a part of the ethnic '*am* (nation/Israel) of the Jewish people" (p. 11).

Korner begins in chapter 1 by providing comprehensive definitions for "supersessionism," "anti-Judaism," and "anti-Semitism" in the NT and in the book of Revelation, as well as "religion," "Judaism(s)," "Jew/ishness," "Christianity," "Christian," and "church/*ekklēsia*."

He then looks extensively in chapter 2 at the use of *ekklēsia* in the first century CE. He examines it both in light of John's use of the term to denote the early Christ-followers in the seven communities to which the book of Revelation was addressed as well as Paul's usage.

In chapter 3, Korner provides an extensive examination of the dating of the book of Revelation and concludes that a later date for the Apocalypse is most warranted.

In chapter 4, Korner examines the question of supersessionist rhetoric in the NT and the book of Revelation. He begins by addressing Paul's references to the "so-called Jew" (Rom 2:17–29) and the designation of the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16). Korner then looks at the *crux interpretum* of the book of Revelation: namely,

John's statements pertaining to "those who say they are Jews and are not" (Rev 2:9; 3:9).

Chapter 5 is a brief chapter in which Korner examines the use of *ekklēsia* in accord with noncivic "associations."

In chapter 6, Korner develops the question further by asking what, if any, correlations exist between "Christ-follower *ekklēsiai* and Jewish synagogue entities" (p. 102). Korner concludes that John's use of *ekklēsiai* for his communities "problematizes scholarly suggestions" that the early Christ-followers were separating from Judaism (p. 114).

In chapter 7, Korner sets forth his conviction that John's *ekklēsiai* are best understood as "the multi-ethnic earthly representatives of a heavenly *kosmos-polis* that is called 'the New Jerusalem'" (p. 115). These *ekklēsiai*, according to Korner, are not the replacement of Israel, and serve as a neutral term and not as counter imperial entities. He then concludes that the New Jerusalem ultimately "will supersede all forms of socio-political power and empire in the age to come" (p. 138).

Chapter 8 (pp. 139–234) is the final and by far the longest chapter, in which Korner examines John's literary context, including John's Jewishness, the Jewish literary structure, genre, Revelation's Jewish eschatology, and Jewish symbolism. In this extended chapter, he sets forth his proposal that the visionary portion of the book of Revelation (which he believes to be from 1:9–22:20) should be read in light of John's use of "telescopic reiteration."

In chapter 9, Korner presents his conclusion: "I understand John's apocalyptic apostolic-prophecy which he calls the *apokalypsis* of the Jesus, the Jewish *Christos*, as being a non-supersessionist visionary drama that socially identifies his multi-ethnic *ekklēsiai* within the *ekklēsia* of Israel" (p. 241).

Korner has no difficulty with acknowledging that the NT affirms the Jewishness of the followers of Christ. Nonetheless, he asserts, "there may still be a non-supersessionist way forward. In essence, this requires posturing John's *multi-ethnic ekklēsia* not as *being* Israel, but rather as being a part *of* Israel" (p. 83; emphasis original). For Korner, the NT people of God are only the children of Abraham in the sense that they share the "faith" of Abraham (p. 88).

In reading Korner, I found myself so often wanting to agree with him, only then to have him seemingly limit the implications of his argumentation. Thus, I would ask, could it be that John's *ekklēsiai* are continuous with the OT people of God because they are the people of God? Not, of course, in the sense of having replaced Israel, but in the sense of being what Israel was called to be: namely, the dwelling place of God? Is it not possible that just as the New Jerusalem is, as Korner says, the "Jewish *kosmos-polis* … itself transformed" (p. 222), that the NT *ekklēsiai* are themselves the inauguration of that transformation?

Korner, as with all post-supersessionists, rightly balks at any conclusion that might be misconstrued as endorsing antisemitism. But, if John's *ekklēsiai* are, in continuity with the OT people of God, the fulfillment of the OT people of God, then why does that have to mean that ethnic Israel has been replaced and that it has no lasting significance?

It seems as though Korner has not adequately weighed all the options. In his view there are two options: "John's extensive social identification with Judaism(s), Jewishness, and Jewish institutions reflect a literary program either (1) of *replacing* Israel with the remnant of Israel, that is, Jewish and non-Jewish followers of the Jewish *Christos*, or (2) of *emplacing* the multi-ethnic associations of John's *Christos*-followers further *within* Israel, without thereby superseding the legitimacy of Israel as a national identity for ethnic Jews who do not follow Jesus" (p. 2).

Korner makes a similar mistake when he examines in chapter 4 of his work the troublesome "those who say they are Jews and are not" passages in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9. When he critiques the conclusion, which he labels as "supersessionist," that John could have had ethnic Jews in view by concluding that in this view the term "Jew" comes to exclude "non-Jesus following ethnic Jews" (p. 57). The problem with Korner's somewhat dismissive claim is that this conclusion is not necessarily correct. Could it not have been the case that John and the NT writers viewed the Christ-following people of God as "Jews," while at the same time affirming the ethnic identity of the Jewish people and even maintaining the conviction that they have a covenantal specialness to them?

Although there is much to commend in Korner's volume, I am not convinced that he has adequately given weight to the possibility that there is a third option: namely, that the NT people of God are in some way the fulfillment of God's covenant promises. Instead, Korner asserts, as too often post-supersessionists want to do, that all fulfillment approaches are the same as replacement theology (p. 9). He even speaks of "the term 'supersessionism'—otherwise known as 'replacement theology' or 'fulfillment theology'" (p. 9). Korner labels N. T. Wright a supersessionist (p. 52), even though he states in his opening chapter, "There are some who would position N. T. Wright into the supersessionist camp. Wright would disagree, though" (p. 10).

The desire to distance oneself from supersessionism is understandable. After all, supersessionism has a vast history of antisemitism within Christianity. Is it possible, however, that the move away from supersessionism has swung the pendulum too far?

Is it not true that the Christ-followers of the NT have been grafted into the same tree from which some have been cut off? Supersessionists endeavor to claim that the tree that identifies the OT people of God has been replaced by a new tree which represents the people of God today. Similarly, post-supersessionist readings also contend that the new people of God are somehow a separate tree—or at least not fully grafted into the one tree.

I would also note that the readability of his work might be helped if he eliminated the extensive discussion of Revelation's genre, which does not appear to have any real weight in supporting his thesis.

Finally, Korner's proposal that the book of Revelation employs "telescopic reiteration" and that this is a key to discerning the structure of the book is intriguing but not convincing. His claim that "after this I looked" helps to organize the "visionary section of Revelation" (p. 147), which he identifies as 1:9–22:20, does not appear to bear the weight of the evidence. Although he refers to the view that

the structure of the book of Revelation is formed around the four instances in which John is "in the spirit" (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), he does not engage this approach. In addition, as much as Korner is to be applauded for his extensive research, he does not appear to have considered the work of David Barr and his insights into the literary nature of the book of Revelation.

In the end, I commend the work of Korner in this volume. He has done his homework and has offered a valuable resource for the study of the book of Revelation and the question of supersessionism.

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Satan, the Heavenly Adversary of Man: A Narrative Analysis of the Function of Satan in the Book of Revelation. By Cato Gulaker. Library of New Testament Studies 638. New York: T&T Clark, 2021, xi + 255 pp., $120.00.

Cato Gulaker, associate professor at Ansgar University College, Norway, employs narrative criticism to argue against the more common dualistic paradigm of cosmic conflict and in favor of a more monistic understanding of Satan as a divine agent in Revelation. From this monistic perspective, Gulaker argues that Satan is not God's adversary; he is not anti-divine and there is no cosmic conflict. Satan is God's obedient servant or tool who is just doing his job in fulfillment of the satanic office. He is the main antagonist of human beings in order to test and sift humanity in service to God's plan, but he is not antagonistic toward God.

Chapter 1 introduces the concepts of cosmological monism and dualism and provides a survey of literature on Satan and narrative and literary studies of Revelation. In the monistic approach, Satan does not have individual autonomy but functions as God's tester, tempter, and judicial accuser while God remains in complete control of Satan's conduct. In the dualistic approach, Satan is the counter-principle to God; he is thus God's enemy and adversary. Gulaker claims that "the majority of scholarly publications on either Satan or Revelation … tend to read from an anti-divine, cosmic conflict perspective" (p. 30).

Chapter 2 presents the main theoretical and methodological considerations related to a narrative study of Satan in Revelation. Gulaker focuses on plot, characterization, point of view, and helpfully discusses the use of extratextual references in narrative criticism. He utilizes Greimas's actantial scheme to differentiate characters (subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent), and identifies the overarching plot of Revelation to be the "sifting of humankind by means of inflicted tribulation" (p. 46).

Chapters 3 through 5 provide exegetical analyses of passages in Revelation in which Satan is mentioned or plays a role in the narrative. Gulaker begins chapter 3 by analyzing the literary frame, form, and function of the seven messages. He proceeds to investigate them one by one in terms of plot, characterization, and point of view and concludes that Satan is a necessary evil who fulfills his assigned function: "This characterizes Satan not as the enemy of God and Christ but as a tool in

the testing of the congregations. He is thus not the antagonist of Christ, but of the congregations—a heavenly sanctioned adversary of man" (p. 96).

Chapter 4 focuses on Revelation 12–13 but begins with a lengthy discussion of the literary context that covers the throne vision in chapters 4–5 and the septets of chapters 6–16. This literary context stresses "the subjugation of heavenly agents under the divine will" (p. 106) in which "vessels of mayhem" are presented as "divine agents and not self-sufficient enemies of God acting on their own accord" (p. 103). Divine passives play a significant role in shaping Gulaker's understanding of Revelation's foundational monistic cosmology (pp. 99, 112, 231). He divides chapters 12–13 into three plots: the story of the woman and dragon, the war in heaven, and the beasts of the sea and earth. He argues against an identification of the Eden serpent as Satan in Revelation 12 (pp. 130–33); this reviewer remains convinced of such a connection. Gulaker concludes the discussion of chapters 12–13: "God endorses and enables Satan to carry out his mission, thus making it a 'God-given' one. This is why the ancient combat myth falls short as a decisive lens of interpretation of this particular section of the book of Revelation. In a monistic narrative, a dualistic approach cannot suffice in an understanding of its main antagonist" (p. 168).

Chapter 5 begins the discussion of the end of Satan in Revelation 20 by considering the literary context in 17–19. Gulaker seems to downplay the personal and individual aspects of Satan by arguing that "Satan encapsulates every adversarial agent promoting religious infidelity (beast, prophet, Babylon/Rome)" (p. 171) and by repeatedly speaking of "the satanic office" (pp. 170, 171, 196, 228, cf. 233) or the "adversarial office" (pp. 193, 195). He argues that "the function of Gog and Magog in these texts is to be the vessel of God's purpose. In Revelation, Satan is inserted between the arm of God and Gog and Magog, thus making him the prolonged arm of God" (p. 213). Satan's fate in the lake of fire is interpreted, not as judgment, but as "the symbolic end of the prosecuting office" (p. 216); it is not the "deserved punishment for assumed crimes" (p. 219). Gulaker concludes that "due to the subordinated function he is given, there is no obvious anti-divine autonomy present in the characterization of Satan in Revelation 20" (p. 228).

Chapter 6 summarizes the study. "The Satan of Revelation functions as a divine agent participating in the eschatological ordeal of the sovereign Lord God almighty, resembling in many ways the raising of adversaries by Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible" (p. 229). "When Satan has fulfilled his function, and humankind has either passed or failed the eschatological ordeal, his services are no longer needed, and he is removed from office" (p. 231).

Gulaker acknowledges that "Revelation draws material from both poles of the axis of tension above [monism verses dualism] in its characterization of Satan" (p. 17), but his argument one-sidedly stresses the monistic aspect of Revelation's cosmology (titles for God, divine passives, evident limitations on and control over evil characters, cf. pp. 111–17) while minimizing or developing implausible explanations for the indications of a more complex form of modified dualism in Satan's autonomy and actions (his competing throne in 2:13; 13:2; 16:10; his attempt to destroy the Messiah in 12:4; his war with Michael and his angels in 12:7; his great wrath in 12:12; his hubris in competition for worship in chapters 13 and 18; his

connection with the beasts who wage war against the Messiah in 19:19; his items of restraint in 20:1–2; and his severe punishment in 20:10). Gulaker argues that Satan's destiny in the lake of fire is less about punishment for autonomous rebellion and more about rhetorical persuasion of the hearer to choose rightly (p. 232), but it is not clear that it can be effective rhetorically if the hearers do not interpret it as punishment for autonomous choice.

The depiction of Satan in Revelation doesn't easily fit either a monistic or dualistic picture and seems to remain a complicated and possibly paradoxical mixture. Gulaker asks compelling questions and competently explores the evidence with careful research of primary and secondary sources but seems to come to a tidy and logically consistent conclusion by smoothing out narrative complexity. This volume will certainly move the scholarly discussion forward and will be a part of future attempts to describe the complex identity and function of Satan in Revelation but does not (and does not claim to, p. 233) provide a definitive answer.

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"He Descended to the Dead": An Evangelical Theology of Holy Saturday. By Matthew Y. Emerson. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019, ix + 251 pp., $30.00 paper.

Matthew Emerson's publication, *He Descended to the Dead,* is a remarkable achievement for resourcing evangelical theology's understanding of a difficult, misunderstood, but undoubtedly central facet of the Christian faith. Emerson impressively and coherently gathers a vast array of sources ranging from biblical scholarship to systematic and historical theology and stitches together an evangelical argument for the historical legitimacy, theological substance, and pastoral implication of this creedal clause. What emerges is a unique monograph that fills a substantial lacuna: an evangelical theology of Holy Saturday.

The book is divided into three parts, first addressing the biblical/historical/theological foundations of the *descensus* (part 1, chapters 1–3), then the connection of the *descensus* with common *loci* of Christian dogmatics (part 2, chapters 4–9), and finally the practical/pastoral implications of the *descensus* for the Christian life (part 3, chapter 10). Chapter 1 opens the book by happily breaking down the false antithesis of Scripture versus creeds perpetuated within some strands of evangelical theology (e.g., Grudem's treatment of descent), suggesting instead that creeds should be charitably embraced under Scripture as possessing derivative authority. Chapters 2 and 3 undertake the most substantial part of the book's argument, namely, a biblical and historical defense of the veracity of Christ's descent to the dead. Relying heavily on the most pertinent monographs available (such as Justin Bass's *Battle for the Keys*), Emerson embarks on a rigorous analysis of several biblical texts and an assessment of diverse theological interpretations that both these texts and the descent clause itself have received throughout church history. Emerson's thesis is that "he descended to the dead" is best understood as the confession that Christ experienced the totality of human death, both body and soul,

but that because this descent was undertaken by the divine hypostasis of the Word, it was a victorious descent that is primarily the beginning of his exaltation and only secondarily part of his humiliation.

With this biblical/historical foundation in place, chapters 4–9 (part 2) turn from exegesis to dogmatics, synthesizing the *descensus* with key *loci* of systematic theology patterned after the Apostles' Creed. Emerson takes this approach because "Christian theology is a fabric, and when we pull on one thread—the descent, for instance—it impacts other doctrines.… The descent is … a beautiful doctrine that not only fits into the fabric of Christian theology but is also integral to that fabric" (pp. 28, 31). Accordingly, chapter 4 begins by addressing the interrelation between Christ's descent into hell and Trinitarian doctrine. While God's unity of essence (inseparable operations) and trinity of hypostases (divine appropriations) throw clarifying light on how Christ's descent is simultaneously the saving act of the one God and the particular act of the eternal Word, an aberrant rendition of the descent (e.g., Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday) can come dangerously close to a transgression of traditional Trinitarian doctrine by transferring the rupture of Christ's descent from his human nature into his eternal divine relation with the Father. When carried to its logical conclusion, this state of affairs creates, in Balthasar's memorable and oxymoronic term, "a godlessness of love" within the Trinity between the Father and the Son (cf. *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory,* vol. 4, p. 324). Emerson suggests against Balthasar that the *descensus* does not have to be considered qua divine instead of qua human in order to avoid Nestorianism (*pace* Balthasar); rather, Christ descends into hell by virtue of his human nature, specifically his soul (p. 112), in such a way that there is no ontological or existential rupture between the eternal hypostasis of the Word and that of the Father.

Emerson moves in chapters 5 and 6 to discuss cosmology and anthropology in light of the descent, arguing for a Christological anthropology of Holy Saturday that addresses the body-soul debate and provides legitimate grounds for affirming a conscious intermediate state. Chapter 7 addresses the *descensus* and soteriology, suggesting that the descent is primarily a victorious event that does not pit penal substitution against *Christus Victor* and does not entail universalism. Chapters 8 and 9 move to ecclesiology and eschatology, using the *descensus* as an opportunity to discuss the inclusive (not dispensationalist or supercessionist) relationship between Israel and the Church, the centrality of the covenant community for salvation, the liturgical and sabbatical significance of the *descensus*, the total communion of saints (both militant and triumphant), and Christ's final defeat of all God's enemies. Chapter 10 ends the book and constitutes part 3, concluding with pastoral and practical implications of the descent, including the interconnection of the Old and New Testaments, the liturgical opportunity to emphasize baptism and creeds in evangelicalism, the imperative for missions, and pastoral care for those facing death in its many forms.

Several significant merits warrant high praise for Emerson's work. His argument is extremely clear and deploys an exhaustive collection of scholarly literature to establish his thesis. It is especially refreshing to find a book-length treatment of the *descensus* that is not reduced to banal discussions of Petrine proof-texts and

modern suspicions toward the patristic tale of Christ as harrower of limbo. While not avoiding these issues, Emerson allows Christ's descent into hell to be considered in its own larger context, namely, at the center of Christian confession and among the most important themes of Christian theology: Trinity, incarnation, death, and resurrection life. It is also greatly appreciated that Emerson refutes (on biblical, historical, and theological grounds) both the perceived connection between *descensus* and universalism and the recent petition of evangelical theology (e.g., Grudem) to perform a "descendectomy" of the Apostles' Creed. As Emerson so convincingly shows, such a move deprives us of one of the sweetest confessions of Christ's victory over death.

Despite these merits there are two substantial shortcomings of the book: (1) an overstated critique of Calvin and (2) an insistence against the word "hell." First, to call Calvin's view "idiosyncratic" and "entirely novel with respect to the views of those that preceded the Reformation" (p. 92) is simply untrue, despite popular sentiment. Almost all of Calvin's allegedly novel claims regarding the descent can be found in patristic, medieval, and late-medieval forerunners. A few examples suffice: Irenaeus and others suggested that Christ was bound in Hades and had to break himself free before freeing others (*Haer.* 5.21.3); Aquinas rationalized the *descensus* with penal substitution (*ST* III.52.1); Nicholas of Cusa (1400s) bequeathed to Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (early 1500s) Calvin's central idea that Christ sustained the *visio mortis* in his tormented soul; Luther's primary emphasis on the descent, like Calvin after him, was the cry of dereliction, not the polemical statements of the Torgau sermon that were enshrined by later Lutheran orthodoxy (cf. the important research of David Truemper and David Bagchi, which Emerson seems to have missed); Erasmus (*De Taedio*) preceded Calvin with the sorrow of Jesus's soul as an experience of hell in Gethsemane; and Calvin's non-spatial interpretation of Christ's descent into hell (often reductively called "metaphorical" or "figurative") found vast precedent in scholastic discussions of the metaphysics of the soul, according to which souls do not move materially like bodies but can move *per essentiam* or *per effectum* (e.g., Abelard, Aquinas, Durand, Pico della Mirandola, and others). In fact, the only thing "idiosyncratic" to Calvin is his Trinitarian safeguard that the Father was never angry toward the Son (*Inst.* 2.16.11), a view that Emerson himself similarly upholds against Balthasar. The oft-repeated accusation that Calvin's view of the *descensus* is a theological novelty unheard of prior to the Reformation is simply a myth of dogmatic accounts of history; in Emerson's case, this incorrect assessment seems to come from his reliance on Bass's monograph *Battle for the Keys* that, despite its many excellent strengths, makes similar reductive claims.

As a matter of fact, Calvin never isolated the *descensus* to the cross or to Good Friday, as Emerson suggests; in fact, for Calvin, this cannot be the case because the *descensus* happened in Christ's soul (and souls cannot be crucified), and this soul-suffering-toward-victory happened concurrent to Christ's life, death, *and burial*, which includes Holy Saturday (*Inst.* 2.16.10). Calvin explicitly stated that the dereliction Christ experienced is that of those who descend into the netherworld *after* death (cf. Calvin's *Psychopannychia*), a view entirely in keeping with the biblical and apostolic tradition of emphasizing the descent into hell as Christ's willing submis-

sion to the totality of human death. Although he emphatically epitomized the descent with the cry of dereliction, Calvin never reduced it to the cross or to Good Friday at the expense of Holy Saturday, as Emerson claims. Emerson's portrait of Calvin may have been significantly improved by noting that Calvin heartily affirmed *Christus Victor* throughout all his writings on the *descensus* (*Psychopannychia*, *Institutes* 1536–1559), and, like Emerson, did not pit this view against penal substitution. Emerson and others may also be surprised to find that Calvin asserted that Christ proclaimed victory over death in his descent and released the fruit of his victory to the Old Testament saints by his Spirit (*Institutes*, 1536).

Second, contrary to Emerson's suggestion that Calvin and the Reformation erred in their theology because they confused *inferos* ("place of the dead") with *inferna* ("hell"), Calvin consistently used the milder term *inferos* to discuss Christ's descent into hell. It should also be noted that the vast majority of English theologians of the sixteenth century and the many variants of the Anglican *Articles of Religion* intentionally chose the term "hell" as best for translating *descendit at inferos*. In other words, even when referring to the victorious view of the descent that Emerson prefers, the earliest English theology was not shy to choose the word "hell" for translating *inferos*. For these reasons, Emerson's proposal is unconvincing on historical grounds that the *descensus* clause should be most accurately translated "to the dead" instead of "into hell" for describing Christ's descent, even if one prefers the victorious view. But even on theological grounds, given the psychologizing that the term "hell" has undergone in the modern mind (e.g., Sartre, "hell is other people"), it is not entirely obvious as Emerson insists that hell describes to modern people a "place of torment for the unrighteous dead" (p. 214) so much as it describes an adverse relation between the human person and God. What better word could one use to translate this clause in order to attest to the depths to which Christ descended to liberate the human race? It seems to me that there is something about the word "hell" (namely, spiritual death, or "the death of the soul," in Calvin's terms) that the naked term "dead" does not adequately capture when used to translate the term *inferos*, and this is something that most theologians have included in their understanding of the descent.

With these caveats in place, I think Calvin would entirely agree with Emerson that the descent into hell is Christ's willing submission to the mortality of the human condition, both body and soul, in order to liberate humanity and acquire a victory over the pains of death. It is therefore unclear how Calvin's view, when properly nuanced, substantially departs from Emerson's overall understanding of the descent. The apparent contradiction seems to be just that—only apparent—and largely due to misunderstandings of Calvin's theology of the *descensus* that have been perpetuated for far too long in systematic and historical theology. I can only see one very important exception in which Calvin's view, understood in depth, is out of keeping with Emerson's important taxonomy of the descent. Like Emerson, Calvin does not understand the *descensus* primarily as the beginning of Christ's exaltation *instead of* his humiliation. For Calvin, the descent is *simultaneously* an expression of humiliation and victory. Although Emerson commendably attempts to strike a similar simultaneity in order to balance the solidarity of the descent with the victory

of the descent, this endeavor is slightly unconvincing and feels artificial because Emerson explicitly prefers to view the *descensus* as the first stage of Christ's exaltation, a sort of patristic pre-resurrection, rather than as the final nail in the coffin of death, which is the plainest meaning of the phrase "descended to the dead" in the world of Scripture and creeds (cf. Ian A. McFarland, *The Word Made Flesh: A Theology of the Incarnation*, p. 151). Perhaps singling out the state of exaltation (*status exaltationis*) over against the state of humiliation (*status exinanitionis*) in the descent is a false dichotomy and that, as Alan Lewis states, "If these alternatives could be held in tension together, then there would be hope" (*Between Cross and Resurrection*, p. 38).

These critiques aside, no one seeking a comprehensive introduction to Christ's descent into hell has any reason to hesitate from enjoying this highly recommended and excellent work, provided Emerson's comments on the Reformation are taken with a historical grain of salt. Moreover, this critique can gladly be set aside in order to commend Emerson's enthusiasm for resourcing evangelical theology with a fresh and abiding appreciation for Christ's descent into hell. One can only hope for more theologians like Emerson who wrestle deeply and profoundly with the *descensus* as an undying facet of Christian confession.

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Ecclesial Diversity in Chinese Christianity. Edited by Alexander Chow and Easten Law. Pathways for Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021, ix + 224 pp., $121.86.

Written by ten distinguished scholars from four countries (China, UK, USA, and Singapore), *Ecclesial Diversity in Chinese Christianity* offers a multi-dimensional presentation of the diverse Chinese Christianity: Space-wise, it covers various Christian expressions in mainland China, Malaysia, Great Britain, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Time-wise, it traverses approximately fourteen hundred years of history from as early as the seventh century, when the church of the East sent missionaries to China, to the present time, when Chinese Christianity has found its various expressions throughout the globe. Sect-wise, it features major branches of world Christianity with particular attention focused on the Anglican church (chap. 2), the Catholic Church (chap. 3), the Three-Self State Church (chap. 6), the Chinese Orthodox Church, the relatively new Reformed churches in China (chap. 7), and the intertwined connections among these churches (chaps. 1 and 8). Direction-wise, the volume sheds light on foreign missions into China, and Chinese migration to the Malay Archipelago (chap. 4) and to Great Britain (chap. 5). Topic-wise, the monograph is exemplary in its interdisciplinary study of subjects such as history, culture, ethnicity, identity clashes between "Chineseness" and "Malaysianness" and "Canadianness" and "Englishness," politics, immigration policy, theology, missions, apologetics, intercultural and multicultural studies. All these dimensions wonderfully intermingle and vividly portray the heterogeneity of Chinese Christianity, or even better, Chinese Christianities. Their ecclesial diversity resists a linear and reduction-

ist interpretation that Alexander Chow succinctly describes as a "simple binary" understanding of registered versus unregistered, open versus underground, legal versus illegal churches in mainland China since the 1980s, and a "homogenous 'ethnic'" nature of diasporic Chinese churches (p. 17).

In his introduction, Chow argues convincingly that the history of Chinese Christianity resists rigid periodization by "eras or waves of foreign missionary activities and indigenous Christian growth" (p. 1). He insightfully traces the interwoven nature of the Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox in China from a fresh historical perspective. Chow's central thesis is that ecclesial diversity "has not always translated to diversity in the theology or the practice of Chinese Christians. Themes such as nationalism, modernity, paternalism, and independence were alive in the early twentieth century, as much as they continue to be alive later in the early twenty-first century" (p. 3).

Chow investigates Chinese ecclesial diversity and theology according to three periods. The first period ranges from the 1840s to 1949 and features supra-denominational coalitions with more liberal theology and other federations independent of Sino-foreign alliances with more conservative theology "borrowed largely from pietist, dispensational, and Pentecostal traditions" (p. 6). The second period (1949–1976) is characterized by official churches such as TSPM (Three-Self Patriotic Movement) and CPA (Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association) and hidden churches such as the "house church" of the Protestants and the "underground church" of the Catholics. The third period (1976–present) features the first generation of so-called Cultural Christians, whose discourses have primarily been in the secular academy (p. 15). Among them, some chose to become Christians and were baptized into the "church of God" rather than any local congregation. For example, Liu Xiaofeng described himself and other like-minded academics as part of Troeltsch's "mystical church" (p. 15). This period also saw the rising of a "third church" formed by "Christian scholars" who distinguished themselves from the patriotic organizations and the more separatist house churches or underground churches (p. 16). For Chow, ecclesial diversity since the 1980s requires sophisticated understanding and therefore cannot be reduced to a set of the binary understandings noted above. Churches established in the Chinese diaspora only make the matter of ecclesial diversity more complicated.

The volume is organized "around a narrative of the development of the global Chinese Church, from the 'century of national humiliation' to China's rise as a major superpower" (p. 18). Part I, "Missionary Encounters in China," looks closely at debates occurring among foreign missionary encounters in China; these have contributed to the contemporary ecclesial diversity. Chapter 2 is written by Mark Chapman from the perspective of the Anglican missionaries whose views toward Chinese culture shifted from a condescending attitude in the nineteenth century to one that treated China on equal terms with Britain in the twentieth century. The conclusion is that in a non-Christian society like China, which is of equal standing to societies of the West, the types of moral responsibility that Christians felt for the larger society had to be exercised cautiously and almost exclusively through education and welfare (p. 48). In chapter 3, Connie Au explores two Catholic texts pro-

duced by Western missionaries in China in the early twentieth century to indicate that China became a site of encounter and conflict between Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity. Au highlights ecumenical challenges for Chinese Christianity illustrated by the two texts and the two versions of the Chinese Bible.

Part II, "New Concerns and New Chinese Churches," explores the ecclesial diversity in the Chinese diaspora especially since the mid-twentieth century. In chapter 4, Jonathan Tan describes the rise of Christianity in Malaysia among Chinese immigrants. Tan proposes that the various racial and ethnic communities within Malaysian Christianity in general, and Chinese Malaysian Christians in particular, "discard their ghetto mentality, set aside racial prejudices and cultural stereotypes, and reach out in mutual engagement with each other's cultural values and ethnic traditions in the quintessential Malaysian spirit of *muhibbah*" (p. 94), namely, goodwill or hospitality. Chow's chapter 5 focuses on the Chinese migration from Commonwealth regions into the United Kingdom. Tracing British history from the early nineteenth century, Chow investigates the emergence and evolution of British Chinese Christians in two periods, namely, from the Napoleonic Wars to the Second World War and the post-War eras. He concludes that, compared with some work by non-ethnic churches to reach ethnic Chinese, "the work by ethnic Chinese to other ethnic Chinese appears to have been much more significant" (p. 116). Still, Chow poses the question of whether and how the British Chinese churches will continue to adapt and constructively engage across borders between and beyond other ethnic Chinese. Both chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate how the formation of overseas Chinese churches helped offer immigrants solidarity against racial tensions and reinforced cultural and ethnic divides by ghettoizing these communities.

In chapter 6, Zhixi Wang draws attention to the Chinese migration *back* to China for the communist cause in the mid-twentieth century. Wang studies the writings of K. H. Ting and juxtaposes his ecclesial and theological work in the 1980s–1990s with his writings in the 1950s. The conclusion is that at his early stage of writing, Ting already wrote of themes resembling his later "Cosmic Christ" that portrays a Jesus who, in his incarnation, was born into a specific nationality and, as a model for Chinese Christians, was a patriot who loved his own people.

The final part, "Chinese Churches and Urban Identity," focuses on contemporary church development in the mainland and the Chinese diaspora, whose churches wrestle with making meaning for themselves, often with tension between the particularities of the cosmopolitan cities within which they are situated and a church that transcends the limits of physical space. In chapter 7, Steven Hu employs the "affective turn" in critical theory and social sciences to the Reformed churches in Shanghai. He demonstrates how they utilize emotion and attachment to construct their urban identity. In chapter 8, Benoît Vermander focuses on the agency afforded to Shanghai as a city by its religious heritage and its booming cosmopolitan concerns. Vermander exhorts the Protestant and Catholic communities to find new ways to navigate the religious, political, and social landscapes. Chapter 9 studies the Chinese churches in Vancouver, British Columbia, by analyzing the journalistic coverage of the *Vancouver Sun*, which constructs essentialized under-

standings of the "Chineseness" of the migrant communities, thereby reinforcing false public narratives of homogeneity.

In the Afterword, Philip Wickeri presents pathways that Chinese Christians have trodden and the problems and prospects toward which these may lead. Wickeri identifies at least three different social forms of Christianity in mainland China, namely, institutional Christianity, community-based Christianity, and intellectual Christians; the three may be positively or negatively related to each another. Wickeri argues that Chinese Christianity "will become more pluralistic, less unified, more sophisticated, less 'foreign,' and all the while more interesting" (p. 218). He advocates that Chinese Christians negotiate the obstacles they face by overcoming the "narrowness of belief" (pp. 216–17), which is a healthy critique of the internal strife existing within Christianity and the external impression of aggressiveness given to the general public.

The volume is a compilation of essays written by emerging and established scholars. Nuanced and valuable insights can be detected throughout the book. What deserves special attention is Wickeri's abiding relationship with Chinese Christians, scholars, and government officials; it equips him with a unique ability to draw well-balanced conclusions. He insightfully points out "the most important single factor, [which] is a distinguishing feature of *Chinese* Christianity," is that the "growth of Christianity has been largely a result of the efforts of Chinese Christians themselves" (p. 210). Wickeri observes an interesting similarity between Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa and Chinese Christianity in that both are "100 miles wide, but only an inch deep" (p. 214). Those familiar with the churches in China will wholeheartedly agree with his assertion because the rapid growth of Chinese Christians increasingly calls for urgent theological training and discipleship while the lack of trained clergy deepens the crisis. Wickeri helpfully points out "the growth of sectarian heretical movements such as the Church of Almighty God (formerly known as Eastern Lightening [*sic*])." I would argue that this expansion is also a result of the lack of theological edification, coupled with the fact that the Chinese government restricts open Christian fellowships, conferences, and workshops that are necessary for the perfecting of Christians in biblical knowledge and inoculation against heretical teachings.

This monograph deals with Chinese Christianities primarily from historical, social, and global perspectives. More work needs to be done to offer an in-depth theological treatment. Even Wang's study of K. H. Ting's theology in his *The Politics of Jesus' Love*, which arguably carries the most theological weight, is more focused on the historical exploration of Ting's thoughts with minimal evaluation in the form of affirmation and critique. Even Chow's highly informative introductory chapter is focused on cultural, political, and unionistic issues. Admittedly, the length of the chapter limits the scope and depth of his thorough treatment of Chinese theologies.

As a Chinese American theologian (in training) born and raised in China, I bring five points into discussion with the book's impressive array of scholars in various disciplines. First, the book's title indicates that the critical subject to be treated is ecclesial diversity within Chinese Christianity. Despite the wide range of ecclesial bodies discussed in the volume, some other major branches within main-

land China are only mentioned in passing, such as the Little Flock (or Assembly Hall, or the Local Churches), True Jesus Church, and the Jesus Family. One possible explanation might be the lack of subject-matter experts.

Second, the Chinese government's mandate of "sinicization" of Christianity is one of the most significant challenges facing contemporary Chinese Christianity. Vermander helpfully points out the "escapist" policy adopted by the official churches who give "lip service to the new orientations while trying to maintain as much autonomy as possible" (p. 178). However, this by no means serves as a thorough theological response. Chinese theology, especially Chinese public theology, bears the responsibility to craft an adequate theological response that not only affirms Christian tradition and questions the mandate's presuppositions but also overcomes "the narrowness of belief in many Chinese churches" (p. 216).

Third, both Chow (p. 16) and Wickeri (p. 213) list "Cultural Christians" as a standalone type of Chinese Christianity treated as either a "mystical church" or a "third church" (p. 16). However, one can discern some confusion in the definition of these designations in terms of their ecclesiality. At one point, Chow describes them as "not associated with any particular branch of Christianity" (p. 15). Elsewhere, they are portrayed as being "instrumental in developing so-called urban intellectual churches" (p. 16, n. 50). A magisterial treatment on the topic of "ecclesial diversity" as in this book warrants a detailed ecclesiological analysis.

Fourth, Wickeri argues that "community-based theologies are difficult to categorize, if these are theologies at all. But in urban areas, many community-based Christian groups include professional people with very high levels of education and sophisticated theologies" (p. 212). This conclusion seems to give the impression that Chinese churches that do not belong to an institutional and intellectual Christianity possess theologies that are either too simple or too complicated, contrary to the fact that many house churches hold onto conservative Christian theologies passed down from Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee, whose theologies have been well studied both in the East and the West.

Fifth, Wickeri's refusal "to generalize about government repression of religion" (p. 216) may be controversial, especially to the vast majority of the Christians in house churches and underground churches who have suffered increasingly greater political control in the past few years. Admittedly, Wickeri is sensitive to the volatile nature of the local governments' execution of the state policy of religious freedom in the manner of "one eye open and one eye closed" (p. 216). After all, one needs to be reminded that the complexity of Chinese Christianity resists the oversimplification of any social and theological evaluation.

Even with these points worthy of further consideration, I highly recommend this book to laypeople and students within a church or academic setting who are interested in Chinese churches both at home and abroad. Readers will be able to understand the diverse nature of Chinese Christianity in various historical and geographical settings.

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Simply Trinity: The Unmanipulated Father, Son, and Spirit. By Matthew Barrett. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021, 364 pp., $24.99 paper.

Matthew Barrett's *Simply Trinity* is a book geared toward a Trinitarian debate that has been surrounding evangelicalism for years. Concerned about a modern drift toward social Trinitarianism, Barrett hopes the book will provide a fresh vantage point to the "God who is simply Trinity" (p. 32). Most of the book seeks to provide a theological way back from what Barrett terms "Trinity drift." Following an introductory chapter, the work is organized under two major sections that include the remaining nine chapters. It is well footnoted and includes a glossary. The opening chapter sets an important foundation, where Barrett shares his personal journey of learning the doctrine of the Trinity within evangelical Christian higher education. Personal experiences often provide acute insight, naturally leading to the distinct ability to meet the needs of others. This book is no exception to that norm. Grounded in the desire for intellectual humility, his approach is to leverage Scripture and the Great Tradition so the reader might freshly "encounter the unmanipulated Trinity" (p. 39).

Part 1 of the book (chaps. 2–3) functions descriptively under the title "How Did We Drift Away?" The section primarily highlights historical theology's place in modern Trinity formulae and the basics of social Trinitarianism. In chapter 2, Barrett argues for the importance of looking to our theological heritage for clarity regarding the Trinity. The chapter highlights the necessity for a "hermeneutic of trust" (p. 66) with respect to the early church fathers. Appropriate creedal authority, according to Barrett, reinforces a humble dependence upon past generations for clarity and avoidance of heresy. He notes that modern theologians have employed "a hermeneutic of distrust" and "either dispose of orthodoxy altogether or modify the Trinity of orthodoxy so that it could meet their social agenda" (p. 66). Renewed trust in the Great Tradition highlights a key doctrine missing from modern Trinity discussions (which influences the title of the book)—God's simplicity.

The third chapter poses the question "When Did the Trinity Get Social?" The chapter walks through a recent history of how and why the doctrine drifted into social Trinitarianism. In his relatable style, playing on Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Barrett argues that a manipulated Trinity haunts modern Christianity. The only way to see clearly moving forward is to "walk through the rooms in the house we call modern Christianity" (p. 70). For example, in "Room #1," Barrett surveys the impact of nineteenth-century Protestant Liberalism upon the doctrine of the Trinity. He notes how Enlightenment influence, through figures such as Friedrich Schleiermacher, accelerated concern for ethics over dogma, wherein "Christianity is not about who God is … so much as what God does in society" (p. 73). Rooms #2 and #3 survey the move by theologians such as Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, and Miroslav Volf toward explicit use of the language of "community" or "society" to make the Trinity relevant to modernity. Barrett reasons that these modern theological maneuvers influence current evangelical positions regarding the Trinity. In a direct manner, Barrett takes up the issue of eternal functional subordination (EFS hereafter) as one of the negative implications within evangelical Trinitarian drift.

He concludes, "We have not only drifted away from the biblical, orthodox Trinity, but we have manipulated the Trinity to meet our social agendas" (p. 93).

After describing the nature and path of Trinity drift, Barrett shifts to the second part of the book: "How Do We Find Our Way Home?" Much of the book is found in this second part (chaps. 4–10) because it functions as a pivot toward the prescriptive by outlining a theological path forward. Chapter 4 details the issue of how God reveals himself to mankind. Conflation of the Trinity is a key takeaway from the chapter as Barrett presents it as a present danger to the doctrine. At the center of this conflation is the relationship between what the economic Trinity reveals about the immanent Trinity. Though the economic reveals the immanent in some degree, Barrett pointedly highlights that "the temporal missions—the sending of the Son and the giving of the Spirit—can *reveal* the eternal relations of origin … but the temporal missions in no way *constitute* the eternal relations of origin" (p. 119, his emphasis). Noticing the danger of conflation helps avoid the disaster of making God in our own image, and it upholds the transcendence of God.

Chapter 5 begins the book's most detailed discussion of God's simplicity. Barrett argues orthodox Trinitarians are not "bare monotheists," but rather they affirm oneness in terms of nature, will, and operation (pp. 138–39). Furthermore, he contends that God's simplicity is the grounds for safeguarding against errors such as the modern shift toward social Trinitarianism. The emphasis of this chapter locates Barrett's work more precisely in agreement with other publications regarding the centrality of God's simplicity in orthodox Trinitarianism. Works such as *All That Is in God,* by James Dolezal, and *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition,* by Craig Carter, similarly argue for the renewed importance of grounding Trinity formulae in God's simplicity. In line with Dolezal and Carter, Barrett concludes that leaping over God's simplicity proves challenging to God's absolute equality of person and subsequently results in serious issues relating to subordination.

In chapters 6 and 7, Barrett focuses on the doctrine of eternal generation as key to orthodox Trinitarianism and the gospel. In one of the more complex theological discussions of the book, Barrett does an excellent job of walking through the "what, when, and how" of the Son's generation. He even provides "nine marks of an unhealthy generation" that highlight tendencies of error (pp. 161–66). The discussion of the nine marks is helpful because certain doctrines are clarified by defining what they are not. For example, one mark of "unhealthy generation" is "multiplication of essence," which underscores how the Son's generation *does not* involve proliferation or division of nature (pp. 167–70). The emphasis on unhealthy generation is critical to driving home a key point of the book: divine generation is much different from human generation. The difference between divine and human generation explains priority in order but not in relations. The details of divine generation will be of critical importance to Barrett's argument against EFS in later chapters. Chapter 7 is a continuation of the book's emphasis upon eternal generation wherein Barrett applies the doctrine to matters of the gospel. The chapter pushes against those who claim eternal generation is a doctrine derived from human imposition upon Scripture. Barrett counters this position by arguing eternal generation is necessary for (1) establishing meaning within the titles of Jesus and (2)

providing authority in metaphors of God found in Scripture. The chapter closes by emphasizing the necessity of eternal generation to the gospel: "For if the Son is not the only begotten Son, then there is no basis on which the Father can send his Son into the world to save sinners like you and me" (p. 210).

Chapter 8 is arguably the most important chapter of the book because it brings into focus the most recent Trinitarian debates (beginning in 2016) within evangelicalism. Barrett explains the position of "EFSers" and provides a fair summary of eternal functional subordination. The chapter is not shy about directly mentioning the names and works of theologians whom Barrett aims to counter. At the core of the debate is what he sees as "embedding subordination deeper within the eternal, immanent identity of God" (p. 225). He is forthright in his position, stating that EFS "undermines biblical orthodoxy and threatens to sink evangelicalism in the swamp of social Trinitarianism" (p. 225). He argues that EFS retains echoes of heresies such as tritheism, Sabellianism, and subordinationism. However, the real "fault-line" in the debate is found in hermeneutics. According to Barrett, "Christology now swallows up the Trinity" because EFS adherents "read humanity back into divinity" (p. 242). Using passages such as Philippians 2 and 1 Corinthians 15, he argues that biblical context is imperative to rightly understanding the relationship between the immanent and economic Trinity. Barrett is emphatic here again about the importance of understanding that mission *reveals* eternal relations of origin. All of this brings about a direct discussion of the way EFS utilizes Trinitarian obedience with the Persons to highlight complementarianism of gender roles; for example, the emphasis on the Son's "obedience" to the Father as a paradigm for a wife's obedience to their husband. According to Barrett, this is a manipulation of the Trinity: "to claim that the Trinity, specifically subordination within the immanent Trinity, is a model for gender roles is about as novel as it gets.… Until EFSers arrived on the scene nobody thought to appeal to subordination in the immanent Trinity as the model for female submission!" (p. 253). Barrett again reinforces the dangers of conflation and lack of historical sensitivity. The way forward should be focused on "hermeneutical humility" and "historical humility" (pp. 256–57).

Chapter 9 is dedicated to the Person of the Holy Spirit and details regarding eternal spiration. Barrett is concerned about the Spirit's spiration as a way of illuminating how eternal relations of origin distinguish the Persons of the Trinity. This chapter focuses on the ordering distinctions within the Trinity. The Spirit's procession means that he "is called the Third Person of the Trinity (not third in time, not third in rank, but third in order)" (p. 271). The remainder of the chapter discusses three important titles (Breath, Gift, and Love) given to the Spirit; these accentuate how order, not rank, is the proper language for discussing the Spirit's spiration. Take for example the title of Love. Barrett shows how the Person of the Spirit has appropriated the work, or attribute, of love as a matter of relational origin. Utilizing Augustine's magnificent work on love and the Spirit, Barrett walks through how the title avoids succumbing to Sabellianism and functions to "accentuate the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son" (p. 283).

Finally, chapter 10 is given to a discussion of the inseparability of the Trinity. Barrett is careful to reinforce the truth that each Person of the Trinity does not

have a separate will. When a will is tied to essence, Barrett contends that (1) "mere cooperation" and (2) "division of labor" are heretical consequences (p. 292). The chapter reemphasizes a key point of the book, which is the Trinity's inseparability of action and divine nature: "Every operation is *from* the Father, *through* the Son, *in* the Spirit" (p. 293). The chapter focuses on divine appropriations as a means of nuancing how each Person acts within the Trinity without diminishing inseparability. Leaning on the works of Gregory of Nyssa, John Calvin, Augustine, and John Owen, Barrett details how divine appropriations function in God's works of creation, salvation, and adoption.

Barrett's book is a much-needed volume on the most recent evangelical debates regarding the Trinity. He provides an accessible work that is apt to capture the attention and understanding of an audience beyond academia proper. Many other writings related to the debate (see references to Carter and Dolezal above) are significant contributions but lack Barrett's relatable prose at some points. Importantly, Barrett does not sidestep issues or inappropriately water down the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather, his prose and ability to connect to culturally relevant backdrops (e.g., sports and movies) testify to his understanding of the subject.

Why does clarity and a solid grasp of an issue matter in the case of Trinitarian discussion? First, creativity is part of the issue Barrett finds in social Trinitarianism. He is creative in terms of *explaining* the historical orthodox position of the doctrine but not in terms of *conflating* the doctrine to meet modern agendas. This point cannot be underscored enough, as it is where the book shines.

Second, one of the most arduous challenges to any work on this doctrine is convincing a range of readers of its importance, especially when discussing often perplexing matters such as eternal generation. Barrett's personal journey as a young theologian galvanizes his ability to address the Trinity and its importance in a compelling manner. Barrett labors to bring the recently marginalized aspects of Trinitarian doctrine (e.g., God's simplicity and divine appropriations) back into focus in a manner that all Christians can understand.

The work could have been strengthened by some attention to historical debates, outside of the early church, with similar intra-orthodox conflict. For example, the Salters' Hall debate of the eighteenth century drew hermeneutical fault lines among orthodox theologians in a manner similar to the modern EFS debates. The issue of subscription to the historical creeds became front-and-center at Salters' Hall. A historical reference along these lines would have provided an important backdrop to the current issue. Barrett does mention the Arian controversy in the early church; however, the Arian battle was often fought against outright enemies of the gospel. A reference to other periods and their Trinitarian challenges might have highlighted how good intentions by orthodox Christians can result in serious long-term theological consequences. This in turn might have underscored the importance of true continuity with the Great Tradition and the need for greater reticence toward mingling creativity and Christian doctrine.

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